Herman Manglona Atalig is elected BOE chair. PAGE 2
'Taxation bills should allow municipalities to get share for operations, utilities.' PAGE 3

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

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Kilili: Parole for Chinese tourists to end

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Sablan

With the U.S. Department of Homeland Security putting in place a new system for the entry of Chinese tourists to the CNMI, that means the discretionary parole program will soon be ending, according to Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) over the weekend.

See PAROLE on Page 4

Babauta: Name Dela Cruz to NMI's legal team for planned 902 talks

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Babauta

Sen. Celina R. Babauta (D-Saipan) is urging Gov. Arnold I. Palacios to consider appointing retired CNMI Supreme Court chief justice Jose S. Dela Cruz as a member of the Commonwealth's legal team for the planned 902 talks between the CNMI and U.S. governments.

In a letter Tuesday to Palacios, Babauta said that Dela Cruz's "expertise, experience, and dedication will be invaluable assets in securing a fair and beneficial agreement for the CNMI and its future

See BABAUTA on Page 4

Arrest made; COVMS lifts lockout

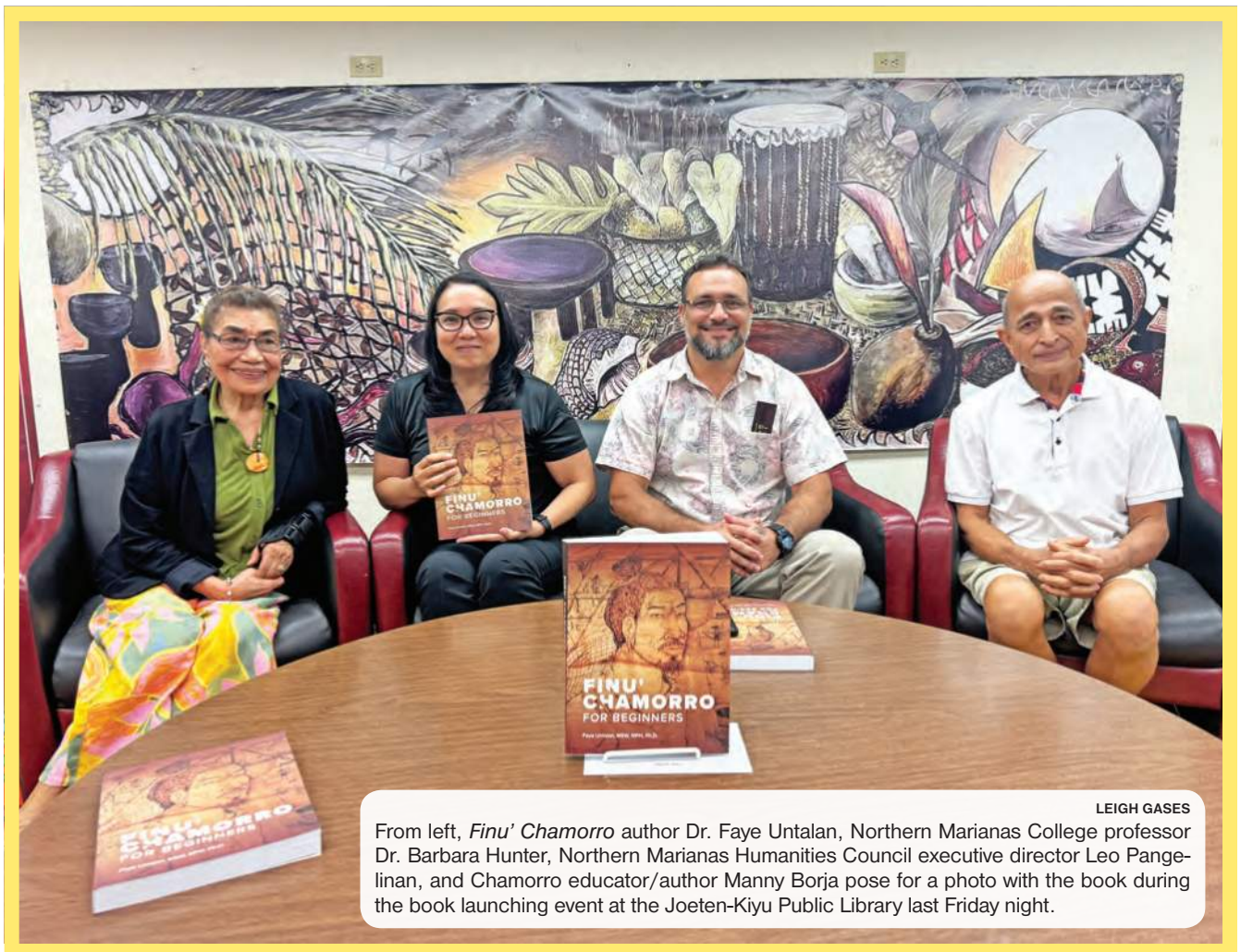
By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Department of Public Safety arrested over the weekend the

See ARREST on Page 4

KIMBERLY B. ESMORES

Last Friday, the Department of Public Safety arrested Joey Daniel Torres Maratita, the man who allegedly caused the lockdown and lockout at COVMS last week. He was brought before Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph Camacho late last Friday afternoon.



LEIGH GASES

From left, *Finu' Chamorro* author Dr. Faye Untalan, Northern Marianas College professor Dr. Barbara Hunter, Northern Marianas Humanities Council executive director Leo Pangelinan, and Chamorro educator/author Manny Borja pose for a photo with the book during the book launching event at the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library last Friday night.

Dr. Untalan discusses *Finu' Chamorro* in book launching

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Book author Dr. Faye Untalan, whose newest book, *Finu' Chamorro for Beginners*, had its book launch at the Northern Marianas College last Friday, said she was inspired to write the book when some Chamorros students at the University of Hawaii at Manoa asked her teach them their language when she was still teaching there.

Inspired by that incident, Untalan used a 2013 grant from the Administration for Native Americans to develop a standard curriculum that could be taught in a college-level course and worked with

See BOOK on Page 4

LEIGH GASES

Finu' Chamorro, authored by Dr. Faye Untalan, is on display during the book launching event at the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library last Friday night. It is a 450-page comprehensive Chamorro language resource book with easy-to-follow plans for all ages.

INSIDE

BUSINESS
Simple Cafe opened inside 99 Cents Supermarket in Garapan, selling snacks and a variety of hot food and cold drinks just before last Christmas.
PAGE 11

WORLD
Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Saturday that he "will not compromise on full Israeli control" over Gaza and that "this is contrary to a Palestinian state."
PAGE 13

LIFE & STYLE
A grand jury indicted Alec Baldwin on Friday on an involuntary manslaughter charge in a 2021 fatal shooting during a rehearsal on a movie set in New Mexico.
PAGE 15

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Local

Atalig is elected BOE chair

A new set of officers will helm the newly formed 19th Board of Education, with the most senior member, retired sergeant major Herman Manglona Atalig, being elected chairman during last Friday's election of officers.

Atalig

Borja

Tenorio

Atalig, who is Rota's elected member and is a Vietnam War veteran, succeeds Antonio L. Borja of Tinian, who was the youngest elected member and chairman in BOE's 35-year history.

All five voting members unanimously elected Atalig to his post, and also elected Saipan BOE member Maisie Bermudes Tenorio as the new BOE vice chairperson. She succeeds Atalig.

Another Saipan BOE member, Gregory Pat Borja, was re-elected unanimously as secretary/treasurer.

"I am overwhelmed with my colleagues entrusting me with this great responsibility. I feel that with all your support, we will continue to be united, to come together. And I strongly feel that if we continue to do that, we could move mountains," said Atalig following his election. "I definitely accept this responsibility and will do my very best and all of my effort to continue to commit to helping our students. Our students will remain my priority—our priority."

Atalig said it has been his nature to take care of the CNMI's people since his time in the U.S. military, so he believes it is important to continue to support all Public School System staff and personnel, which is under the leadership of the new Education commissioner, Dr. Lawrence Camacho.

The new set of officers will serve one-year terms.

Before the election, then-chair Antonio L. Borja presided over the meeting. The election began with the process of nominating candidates to the various positions.

Atalig was nominated by Gregory Pat Borja.

Another Saipan elected BOE member, Andrew L. Orsini, nominated Tenorio.

Gregory Pat Borja was nominated by former chair Antonio L. Borja.

The BOE is the policymaking and governing body of PSS. It is a constitutionally created independent board of the CNMI government. It is composed of five elected and voting members and three non-voting members.

The three non-voting members are teacher representative Dr. Dora Borja Miura; student representative Jane Mozunder, and non-public school representative Dr. Ronald Snyder.

BOE policy requires an annual election of officers. ***(PR)***

CONGRATULATIONS CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Abel Deleon Guerrero graduated from U.S. Air Force Basic Military Training on Jan. 17, 2024 at Lackland Airforce Base in San Antonio, Texas. Deleon Guerrero, now with a rank of basic airman, is the son of Farrah Ann Borja and Mariano Deleon Guerrero of Saipan.

BOE

Newly elected Board of Education chair Herman M. Atalig of Rota, right, confers with his predecessor, former chair Antonio L. Borja of Tinian, during last Friday's BOE meeting on Capital Hill.

'Taxation bills should allow municipalities to get share for operations, utilities'

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Tinian Mayor Edwin P. Aldan said Friday the House of Representatives' five revenue-generating bills that are before the Senate for action should contain provisions to supplement any budget shortfall.

In his testimony during the Senate Fiscal Affairs Committee public hearing on Tinian, Aldan said language must be included in the proposed bills allowing all municipalities to acquire some revenues to address the lack of funding for operations and utilities within municipalities.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

As seen in this screengrab from a YouTube video, Sen. Donald M. Manglona (Ind-Rota), who chairs the Senate Fiscal Affairs Committee, presides over a public hearing at the Tinian Public Library last Friday afternoon to receive testimony about five revenue generating bills.

Aldan, who was not available during the public hearing held in the Tinian Public Library, had his testimony read by Tinian Municipal Council vice chair Anna Marie C. San Nicolas.

One of the bills discussed was House Bill 23-07, with proposed Senate substitute, to amend the Commonwealth Code on taxing tobacco products.

The second was House Bill 23-41, HD1, to establish an excise tax for betel nut/areca nut and lime mix/afok/or bweesch.

The third was House Bill 23-68, HS1, to impose a 10% ad valorem tax on private individuals purchasing vehicles from dealerships or private parties outside the CNMI, excluding businesses or commercial entities.

The other bill discussed was House Bill 23-78, HS1, to increase the tax on soft drink and alcoholic beverage containers.

The last legislation was House Bill 23-74, HD1, to impose an additional 3% tax on the yearly gross revenues of construction activities in excess of $250,000.

Sen. Donald M. Manglona (Ind-Rota), who chairs the committee, also invited to testify Tinian Municipal Council chair Joseph E. Santos, Department of Finance-Tinian resident department head Melissa Mendiola, Department of Commerce-Tinian resident department head Mary Susan Perez, and Tinian Chamber of Commerce president Philip M. Long.

Manglona said yesterday that the committee will also hold public hearing on the bills on Rota around first week of February.

Aldan's testimony was more general as opposed to the specific bills themselves, but he found it disconcerting that these proposed bills have no precise estimates or projections on the total revenue the CNMI will receive from the proposed taxes.

Aldan said thorough research and revenue projection must be conducted to ensure that the tax increases are aligned with the CNMI's current circumstances and revenue.

He said the community relies on a prudent allocation of funds and any tax changes must be thoroughly vetted for the well-being of citizens.

Aldan said that, as mayor, he must ensure that the best interests of the community are taken into account when making decisions regarding taxation and budget allocation.

Aldan said he understands that the bills are intended to raise revenue for the CNMI general fund to supplement a shortfall in operational funding for the fiscal year 2024 budget and possibly fiscal year 2025.

ARMATECH

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Scheduled power service interruption in San Antonio today

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. would like to inform the general public of a scheduled power service interruption today in San Antonio, as CUC continues its ongoing system maintenance. Scheduled power service interruptions may be subject to change either on the day of or prior to, considering potential issues or weather-related factors.

The power service interruption will be from 1pm to 3pm and no water wells, wastewater facilities, and traffic lights will be affected.

The purpose of the power service interruption is to allow CUC linemen to install a double dead-end structure on a power pole to minimize the affected areas during a power service interruption.

CUC

The map of the Commonwealth Utilities Corp.'s scheduled power service interruption today in San Antonio.

CUC appreciates the public's cooperation and understanding as it works to ensure reliable service for our customers. For more information, contact its hotline at (670) 236-4333, visit its website, and monitor its Facebook page for the latest updates. For emergencies, contact Customer Service at (670) 664-4282. ***(CUC)***

SAIPAN HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE
Office of the Mayor
Municipality of Saipan

NOTICE OF REGULAR SHEFA BOARD MEETING

In accordance with 1 CMC § 9901 et seq., as amended, the Saipan Higher Education Financial Assistance (SHEFA) Board is hereby giving notice of its regular board meeting, to be held on January 22, 2024, at 3:00 p.m., Office of SHEFA conference room, 2nd Floor, CTC Building, Oleai, Beach Road, Saipan.

AGENDA

I. Preliminary Matters
1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Adoption of Agenda
4. Adoption of Minutes from December 11, 2023

II. Public Comment (s)
III. Committee Reports
a. Committee on Awards
b. Committee on Appeal/Deferments/ Forbearance
c. Committee on Policy and Procedures
d. Committee on Program and Development
e. Committee of Fiscal, Legislative, and Community Affairs
IV. Administrator's Report
V. Chairman's Report
VI. Old Business
1. None
VII. New Business
1. Spring 2024 Application Status
2. Annual Budget Proposal
VIII. Executive Session – Appeals
IX. Miscellaneous Matters
X. Next Meeting
XI. Adjournment

/s/ Ms. Kaelani B. Demapan- Chairwoman, Board of SHEFA Directors

P.O. Box 10001, PMB 3648 Saipan, MP 96950-8901
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COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

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PO BOX 501055•SAIPAN•MP•96950
PHONE: (1-670) 237-6500/1 • FAX: (1-670) 234-5962
WEBSITE: WWW.CNMIPORTS.COM

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATION STATEMENTS FOR ARCHITECTURAL/ENGINEERING DESIGN AND PLANNING SERVICES

CHARLIE DOCK EXTENSION PROJECT
PORT OF SAIPAN
PROJECT NO. CPA-SS-001-24

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) is a public corporation and autonomous agency of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). In accordance with its Procurement Rules and Regulations, CPA is soliciting statements of professional qualifications from interested Consultants for Architectural and Engineering (A/E) Design and Planning Services for the Charlie Dock Extension Project at the Port of Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands, Project No. CPA-SS-001-24.

The project is being funded by the U.S. Maritime Administration and is in accordance and compliance with CPA's Procurement Rules and Regulations, Section 40-50-202, Architect-Engineer Design and Construction Management Services.

The Request for Qualification (RFQ) Package is available at CPA's Administration Office, 2nd floor of the arrival terminal at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport. No fee is required for obtaining the RFQ package. Electronic copies may be made available upon written request to Ms. Wendi Prater at wprater@cnmiports.com or Ms. Sheri Llagas at receptionist@cnmiports.com.

Questions regarding this request for qualification statements must be submitted to Ms. Prater, CPA's Executive Assistant/Project Manager, via email to wprater@cnmiports.com or hand delivered to the CPA Administration Office by no later than 5:00 p.m. CHST, Friday, January 12, 2024.

The statements of professional qualification will be evaluated based on the criteria available in the RFQ package.

Interested Consultants are requested to submit one (1) original, four (4) copies and one (1) electronic version in .pdf of their statements of professional qualifications no later than **5:00 p.m. CHST, FRIDAY, JANUARY 26, 2024.** Statements of qualification must be presented by a combination of both brochures and the use of current U.S. Government Standard Form 330.

The CPA reserves the right to reject any or all statements of professional qualification for any reason, if in its sole opinion to do so would be in its best interest.

/s/ LEO B. TUDELA
Executive Director

Date: December 20, 2023

COMMONWEALTH JUDICIARY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

Guma' Hustisia / Iimwal Aweewe / House of Justice
P.O. Box 502165 ▪ Saipan, MP 96950
Telephone (670) 236-9700/9800 ▪ Facsimile: (670) 236-9702
Website: www.NMIjudiciary.com

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Announcement No. 24-004
POSITION TITLE: **Deputy Clerk II – Drug Court**
Department: Drug Court Division
Annual Salary Range: $23,000 – $25,000
Location: Saipan
Opening Date: 1/22/2024 Closing Date: Until Filled

Announcement No. 24-005
POSITION TITLE: **Deputy Clerk I**
Department: Clerk of the Superior Court
Annual Salary Range: $20,485 - $23,625
Location: Saipan
Opening Date: 1/22/2024 Closing Date: Until Filled

Announcement No. 24-006
POSITION TITLE: **Law Clerk for an Associate Judge**
Department: Superior Court
Annual Salary Range: $60,000
Location: Saipan
Opening Date: 1/22/2024 Closing Date: Until Filled

Announcement No. 24-007
POSITION TITLE: **Program Specialist**
Department: Judiciary Administrative Office
Annual Salary: $30,000 - $35,000
Location: Saipan
Opening Date: 1/22/2024 Closing Date: Until Filled

Announcement No. 24-008
POSITION TITLE: **Caseworker I**
Department: Mental Health Court Division
Annual Salary: $35,000 - $40,000
Location: Saipan
Opening Date: 1/22/2024 Closing Date: Until Filled

INTERESTED PERSONS PERSONS Application forms are available at the Judiciary Administrative Office at the Guma Hustisia/Iimwal Aweewe/House of Justice in Susupe, or at the Superior Court offices on Kotten Tinian and Centron Hustisia in Rota during normal business hours except on weekends and holidays. Completed applications, cover letter, and three references should be submitted to:

NMI Judiciary
Human Resources
Guma' Hustisia/Iimwal Aweewe/House of Justice
P.O. Box 502165
Saipan, MP 96950
Tel. (670) 236-9818
Cell. (670) 783-8592
Fax. (670) 236-9702
hr.judiciary@NMIjudiciary.gov

This job announcement will remain open until filled and can be seen and a printable copy of the application downloaded at http://www.nmijudiciary.gov

The Judiciary reserves the right to rescind or cancel this JVA at any time without notice.

THE CNMI JUDICIARY IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER AND EMPLOYER.

Local grocery store manager accused of assault

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Green Consume Market store manager Li Ren Wei has been accused of sexually assaulting an employee and wrongfully terminating her.

Marian Elena Sapo is suing Joy Lee Corp., which does business as Green Consume Market and its store manager, Li, in Superior Court on the grounds of wrongful and constructive termination, assault and battery, intentional infliction of emotional distress, and vicarious liability.

Sapo, through her lawyer, has asked the court to award her unspecified damages.

According to the complaint, during her employment at Green Consume, Li allegedly often verbally harassed Sapo by telling her he wanted her to be his girlfriend and would allegedly put a hand on Sapo's back at times.

Sapo said she kept telling Li that she did not want to be his girlfriend and that she had a boyfriend.

Sapo said she did not quit her job or complain to the police because she was afraid of not being able to find another job to financially support herself.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Green Consume Market and its manager, Li Ren Wei, are facing a wrongful termination and assault lawsuit filed by a former employee alleging she was sexually harassed while she was employed there.

ARREST

From page 1

man who allegedly entered the Chacha Oceanview Middle School without authorization last week. The school, in turn, has since lifted the lockout in place at the COVMS campus.

DPS arrested Friday Joey Daniel Torres Maratita, the man who allegedly caused the lockdown and lockout at COVMS last week.

It was learned that Maratita, who has a previous court-issued temporary restraining order against him, violated the terms of his restraining order by entering the school to talk to a teacher believed to be a previous partner.

Maratita was brought before Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph Camacho late last Friday afternoon on charges of disturbing the peace, domestic violence, and contempt of court.

The court imposed a $10,000 cash bail on Maratita before remanding him back to Department of Corrections custody where he will await further court proceedings or until he presents the court with an eligible third-party custodian.

The court ordered Maratita to return to court on Jan. 24 for a preliminary hearing; he will be arraigned on Jan. 29.

Court documents, which recount the COVMS incident, state that police officers responded last Jan. 17 at around 11:31am to a disturbing the peace, domestic violence, assault and battery, and contempt of court report at the school.

Police officer Maridel Camacho arrived on campus at around 11:34am, and spoke with COVMS principal Martha Kintol who gave details about the car Maratita was allegedly driving and informed her that the school had been placed on lockdown due to the incident. Kintol then escorted Camacho to the school's main office to speak with the person who had called police—a COVMS faculty member who witnessed the incident.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

BABAUTA

From page 1

generations."

The senator recommends appointing Dela Cruz as a member of the CNMI legal team, if not the lead counsel, for potential 902 talks with the U.S. government, should Palacios pursue the consultative discussions with representatives of the U.S. president pursuant to Article 11, Section 902 of the Covenant to establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The Covenant provides for the 902 Talks every 10 years.

Babauta said the 902 talks hold immense importance for the future of the CNMI and that securing a favorable outcome requires a team with exceptional legal talent, negotiation expertise, and a deep understanding of the CNMI's unique position.

"Chief Justice Dela Cruz embodies these qualities and would be a great asset to your 902 legal team," the senator told Palacios.

At these consultative discussions, Babauta said, the CNMI needs to focus on key issues affecting the Commonwealth now and in the near future, and which would require either U.S. congressional action, federal agency regulatory actions, amendments to existing laws and regulations, or presidential executive orders.

She said the 902 talks represent a pivotal moment for the CNMI's future, and having the best possible legal representation is crucial.

The senator said Dela Cruz's extensive experience in the legal system, coupled with his deep understanding of the Covenant relationship between the CNMI and the U.S., positions him uniquely to contribute to the negotiations.

Babauta chairs the Senate Judiciary, Government and Law Committee and Senate Committee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations.

During Dela Cruz's legal career, he presided over landmark cases with significant implications for the CNMI's legal landscape, including those related to immigration, federal preemption, and the Covenant relationship. Babauta said Dela Cruz's deep understanding of the CNMI's legal and political framework will be crucial in navigating the complexities of the 902 negotiations.

"With over two decades of service on the CNMI Supreme Court, including nine years as chief justice, he possesses a profound understanding of both federal and Commonwealth law particularly, the Covenant, that is unmatched," she said.

Last Oct. 24, the CNMI Senate unanimously adopted Senate Joint Resolution 23-05, which Senate President Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan) had introduced, to ask U.S. President Joe Biden and Palacios to consult on a number of subjects, as provided in Section 902 of the Covenant that established the CNMI's relationship with the United States. The House of Representatives adopted the resolution last Nov. 6.

Palacios agreed in an earlier interview that it's time to convene 902 Consultations between the CNMI and the U.S.

PAROLE

From page 1

Sablan said in his *e-kilili* newsletter that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security announced Thursday that the use of discretionary parole to allow the entry of Chinese tourists will be replaced by a new electronic system called Economic Vitality & Security Travel Authorization Program, or EVS-TAP.

Under the current parole system, tourists from China present paper documents on arrival in the Marianas. Customs and Border Protection officers only have a few minutes to decide to allow entry.

Sablan said EVS-TAP will require electronic submission at least five days before travel, giving CBP time to check the traveler against security watchlists and various law enforcement databases. He said an electronic "board" or "no board" will then be issued to the airline. CBP may still refuse entry on arrival.

The delegate said travelers under the EVS-TAP waive their right to contest deportation or removal and will not be referred to an immigration judge.

"In addition, the electronic EVS-TAP will speed up arrival wait-times and reduce costs for CBP," Sablan said.

The EVS-TAP program arose from the consultations between the administrations of then-governor Ralph DLG Torres and then-U.S. president Donald Trump in 2019 as a way to tighten control of tourism between the Marianas and China. The 2019 plan was never implemented.

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce and the Hotel Association of the NMI had urged Sablan in a letter last year to advocate for the EVS-TAP. The letter was also addressed to Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang, Senate President Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan), House of Representatives Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez (Ind-Saipan), and members of the Senate and House, among others.

The letter was in response to the November 2023 letter some U.S. lawmakers sent to Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas, calling for the abolition of the discretionary parole program

Last month, Sablan wrote to Mayorkas asking him to move forward with the EVS-TAP.

LEIGH GASES
From left, University of Guam Press' Via Justine De Fant, LaVonne Guerrero-Meno, and Victoria Lola Leon Guerrero pose with Dr. Faye Untalan's *Finu 'Chamorro* books during the book launching event at the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library last Friday night.

BOOK

From page 1

and was guided by Chamorro language instructors.

Out of that came Untalan's book, *Finu' Chamorro for Beginners*, which a thorough and hands-on instructional guide with language exercises for Chamorro language learners of all levels. It is published by the University of Guam Press under its Proa Publications imprint.

The 450-page book offers comprehensive and practical lessons and language drills for those who want to be confident and proficient in speaking the Chamorro language. It has easy-to-follow lesson plans for all ages on pronouns, sentence structure, verbs, vocabulary, and much more.

Untalan said her aim was to develop a textbook for post-secondary education, where college students would have the same curriculum with learning Chamorro. "We had to coordinate and make sure that that's woven together so it becomes a single process to learn," she said.

Last week's book launch also featured a panel discussion on Friday night at the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library. The panel was made up of Leo Pangelinan, director of the Northern Marianas Humanities Council; NMC professor Dr. Barbara Hunter; and educator and Chamorro author Manny Borja. They joined Untalan in discussing the book, and Chamorro culture and language, as the audience asked questions and made comments.

Before the open panel discussion, NMC president Dr. Galvin Deleon Guerrero shared how hard it was for him to learn Chamorro growing up and said that, "you don't help someone learn something by shaming them. You help them by supporting them, by giving them attention, by being patient with them, and by giving them the resources they need to learn."

He added that the book is a great resource that can be used to help keep the Chamorro culture alive, as "our culture lives in our language. We cannot let it die."

Victoria Leon Guerrero, director of Publishing at the University of Guam Press, thanked the UOG Press' partnership with NMC and Proa Publications, JKPL, and the Northern Marianas Humanities Council.

One question for the panel members was, "Why do you believe it's essential for language learners to understand the cultural context of Chamorro people and does this have any bearing on learning the language?" Pangelinan's reply was that, like what Deleon Guerrero had earlier said, "Culture is in the language. It's very difficult to pick up a language without the context in which you're trying to use it and have a meaningful exchange with the human beings around you. So, it's very much important and I think this book does this beautifully."

Those who wanted to buy the book were able to do so at a discounted price of $45.

Finding hope amidst despair: An actor's personal journey

For Northern Marianas College student John San Nicolas, playing the lead role in the upcoming film, *ISLA: Isla'n Esperansa* (*Island of Hope*), has been a personal journey to find hope amidst the despair in reality as well as in fiction.

"Playing this character wasn't really difficult because I could relate to the character so well," he said. In the film, his character, Matt, is a math whiz who tries to save his family as he gets pulled into the criminal underworld of the island. In playing the role, he noted, "It got hard to separate Matt from myself because we have so much in common, except, of course, for the criminal part."

Of all the things they have in common, San Nicolas said the dynamic family relationships struck a chord for him. As he put it, "Rich or poor, every family has its problems, and even though you love each other and enjoy happy times, every family still deals with problems that are not always easy to fix."

This is why the film's theme of despair resonated so much with him. He said, "The despair in the story is as real as it can get." He added, "Although Matt tries his best to get out of the despair he's in, he risks losing everything."

But San Nicolas also appreciates that the flip of despair in the film, and in life, is hope. He said, "Hope comes from family—the hope Matt's mom had for her son, the hope that he has for her, even the hope their neighbor had for them." He added, "They are a family of hope."

That is why San Nicolas believes everyone that watches the film will be able to relate as well. As he noted, "You see all these Hollywood films portraying rom-coms and superhero movies that all seem so unreal, but this film touches on real and regular family issues." Driving the point home, San Nicolas said, "This is a good reflection of what we here on island are going through."

That is why he also emphasized, "Everyone on island needs to see this film."

ISLA: Isla'n Esperånsa (Island of Hope), a Northern Marianas College and Mount Carmel School joint production, will have a limited premiere screening on Thursday, Jan. 25, at 6pm at Hollywood Theaters. Tickets are $15 each and can be purchased at Hafa Bean, TRIBE Marianas, and Mount Carmel School's Business Office. Due to limited seating, advance purchase of tickets is highly recommended. Due to mature content and graphic language, adult discretion is also advised. ***(PR)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Opposite Maisie B. Tenorio, center, and Friella Dela Santa, right, who play his mother and sister respectively, John San Nicolas finds hope in family as the lead character, Matt, in the upcoming film *ISLA: Isla'n Esperånsa (Island of Hope)*. The film will have a limited premiere screening on Thursday, Jan. 25, at 6pm at Hollywood Theaters.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Northern Marianas College student John San Nicolas plays Matt, the lead character in the upcoming film *ISLA: Isla'n Esperånsa* (*Island of Hope*), which will have a limited premiere screening on Thursday, Jan. 25, at 6pm at Hollywood Theaters.

COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-24-009

ROTA WATER CAVE ENCLOSURE/ REPLACEMENT OF WOOD STAIRS

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Rota Water Cave Enclosure / Replacement of Wood Stairs in Rota, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The project consists, in general, of the installation of a new 2-inch Sch. 40 G.I. Pipes Stairs and other related work. The work shall be done in accordance with the Project Plans and Specifications and without disruption to the daily operation of the water system.

This project is funded by a grant from the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) Public Law 20-61.

CUC requires the Project to be completed in **150 calendar days** from the date of award of the contract.

Prospective Bidders for this IFB must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $200.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by a Site Visit is scheduled on **January 24, 2024 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-IFB-24-009, Rota Water Cave Enclosure / Replacement of Wood Stairs Project"**, to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Comme cial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on February 13, 2024**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

A Bid Guarantee of *fifteen percent (15%)* of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The bid guarantee may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety.

A *Payment Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent and a *Performance Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract. Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered bidders and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on January 26, 2024**, to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email at manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Mr. Edgar Tuazon, Project Engineer – via email at edgar.tuazon@cucgov.org and Ms. Christie L. Sablan, Procurement & Supply, Senior Administrative Technician – via email at christie.sablan@cucgov.org

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason and waive any defects in said bid proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

BETTINA G. TERLAJE
Acting Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

MICHAEL A. WHITE, ESQ. F0122
THE LAW OFFICES OF MICHAEL A. WHITE, LLC
POST OFFICE BOX 5222
SAIPAN, MARIANA ISLANDS 96950
TEL: (670) 234-6547
FAX: (670) 235-9537
ATTORNEYS FOR Plaintiff

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION,	]	CIVIL ACTION NO. 07-436
Plaintiff,	]	
-v-	]	
Henry O. Ogo Defendant.	]	

THIRD AMENDED NOTICE OF SALE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuant to an Order issued by the Court in this matter on September 16, 2008, I will sell, at public auction, to the highest bidder, on the terms and conditions set forth hereinbelow, all of the right, title, and interest of Defendant in and to the following property: Lot No. 345 R 321, situated in Sinapalo I, Rota, Northern Mariana Island, containing an area of 950 square meters, more or less, as shown on the Division of Lands and Survey Official Cadastral Plat no. 345 R 07 dated July 1, 1984, the description therein being incorporated herein by reference.

Date, Time, and Place of Sale. The sale will be held on Friday, February 2, 2024, at the hour of 1:30 p.m., at the Law Offices of Michael A. White, LLC, Joeten Center, Susupe, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. The sale will be open to the general public.

Terms and Conditions of Sale. The Terms and Conditions of Sale may be obtained from the undersigned, either prior to or at the sale. These terms and conditions shall govern the conduct of the sale.

DATED, this 27th day of December, 2023:

/s/
MICHAEL A. WHITE,
Auctioneer

MICHAEL A. WHITE, ESQ. F0122
THE LAW OFFICES OF MICHAEL A. WHITE, LLC
POST OFFICE BOX 5222
SAIPAN, MARIANA ISLANDS 96950
TEL: (670) 234-6547
FAX: (670) 235-9537
ATTORNEY FOR Plaintiff

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

In the Matter of the Estates of	]	CIVIL ACTION NO. 04-0498 and consolidated case (C.A. No. 07-0289)
MATEO M. TAISACAN and SABINA M. TAISACAN, Deceased.	]	

FOURTH AMENDED NOTICE OF SALE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that I will sell, at public auction, to the highest bidder, on the terms and conditions set forth hereinbelow, all the right, title, and interest of the Estates of Mateo M. Taisacan and Sabina M. Taisacan in and to the following property: an agricultural homestead situated in Ginalagan, Rota, Northern Mariana Islands, designated as Tract no. 22127, containing an area of 25,000 square meters, more or less, as shown on the Division of Lands and Surveys' Official Survey Plat no. 2066/79 dated December 20, 1984.

Date, Time, and Place of Sale. The sale will be held on Friday, February 2, 2024, at the hour of 1:30 p.m., at the Law Offices of Michael A. White, LLC, Joeten Center, Susupe, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. The sale will be open to the general public.

Terms and Conditions of Sale. The Terms and Conditions of Sale may be obtained from the undersigned, either prior to or at the sale. These terms and conditions shall govern the conduct of the sale.

DATED, this 27th day of December, 2023:

/s/
MICHAEL A. WHITE, ESQ., R-0122
Attorney for Administratix

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
3rd Floor, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building
P.O. Box 501220 CK • Saipan, MP 96950-1220
Tel: (670) 664-4282 • Facsimile: (670) 235-5131

REVISED PUBLIC NOTICE

AGENDA

Pursuant to the Open Government Act (1 CMC §9901 et seq), the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation ("CUC") Board of Directors hereby informs the general public that the Board will hold its regular meeting on Thursday, January 25, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. The meeting will be held at the CUC Conference Room, Room 17, 3rd Floor, Joeten Dandan Building. The following agenda will be considered and public attendance is welcome.

I. Preliminary Matters
- A. Call to Order
- B. Roll Call
- C. Adoption of Agenda*
- D. Adoption of Minutes
  1. December 7, 2023 Regular Board Meeting
- E. Correspondence

II. Management Report
- A. Executive Director's Report
- B. Chief Financial Officer's Report
- C. Legal Counsel's Report

III. Committee Reports
- A. Personnel Committee

IV. Old Business
- A. Proposed Amendments to CUC's Procurement Rules and Regulations
- B. Amendment to CUC Board Bylaws
- C. Update on the Recruitment of the Executive Director Position
- D. Net Metering

V. New Business
- A. Appeal to the Board of Directors Re: Administrative Case No. 17-CUC-0001BD
- B. CHCC Receivables
- C. Fats, Oils, Grease (FOG) Program
- D. Proposed Revisions to Human Resources Rules and Regulations

VI. Public Comments**

VII. Executive Session*

VIII. Announcements

IX. Adjournment

_____/s/_____
JANICE A. TENORIO, CHAIRWOMAN

* In accordance with Public Law 8-41, additional agenda items may be added to the above listing only by a recorded vote of the majority members of the governing body.
** Pursuant to 1 CMC §9912, the CUC Board of Directors may vote to meet at any time in executive session, to consult with the Legal Counsel on matters deemed privileged and confidential.

UOG announces 6 new academic administrators

The University of Guam announces the appointments of six academic administrators.

"Each of these individuals has shown unwavering dedication to UOG's mission of Ina, Deskubre, Setbe and to the well-being and success of our students," UOG president Anita Borja Enriquez said. "I am looking forward to working with them in their new roles as we propel the university forward."

Peralta

Rojas

Sant

Santos-Bamba

Vuki

Wen

Senior vice president and provost

Dr. Sharleen Santos-Bamba has been named senior vice president and provost after a nationwide search. Santos-Bamba now fills the position vacated by Enriquez when she became the 12th president of UOG.

A UOG alumna, Santos-Bamba joined UOG 20 years ago as a part-time instructor in the English Department at the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences. In 2015, right after she received tenure as faculty, she stepped up to be the associate dean at the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences. She served as interim Vice Provost, beginning in January 2022 and as interim senior vice president in August 2023.

She holds a Ph.D. in English from Indiana University of Pennsylvania, a graduate certificate in Management Development from Harvard Graduate School of Education, a Master of Arts in Literacy Education from Pacific Lutheran University in Washington State, and a Bachelor of Arts in English from UOG.

Interim vice provost, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs

Dr. Pamela Peralta is the interim vice provost, Office of Research and Programs. She joined the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs in 2020 and led ORSP to achieving a streamlined grant management system and a tenfold increase in grant applications.

She holds a Master of Business Administration from the University of Phoenix, Hawaii; a Doctorate in Education in Organizational Leadership from Argosy University, Hawaii; and a Bachelor of Arts in International Relations with emphasis in French Studies and Hispanic Studies from Mills College, California.

Peralta will also continue in her role as director of Grants and Contracts.

Director, Water and Environmental Research Institute of the Western Pacific

Dr. Yuming Wen is the new director of the Water and Environmental Research Institute of the Western Pacific. Wen joined UOG as a tenure-track assistant professor of Geographic Information Systems 19 years ago. He has conducted numerous research projects on water and environmental issues in Guam, the Northern Marianas, and the Federated States of Micronesia.

Wen received a Ph.D. in Environmental Sciences with emphasis on GIS, spatial analysis and modeling, and remote sensing, from the University of Rhode Island.

He holds a Master of Engineering in Surveying from Southwest Jiaotong University, China, and a Bachelor of Engineering in Surveying, from Shandong University of Science and Technology, China.

Interim dean, Enrollment Management and Student Success

Dr. Gena Rojas will lead Enrollment Management and Student Success as interim dean.

Rojas began her career at UOG in 1991 as a secretary at the School of Business and Public Administration and continued her classified service as program coordinator III at the Financial Aid Office and eventually joined the ranks of UOG faculty. She served as Extension Faculty at the College of Natural and Applied Sciences and as faculty in the School of Business and Public Administration and was the director of the Regional Center for Public Policy. She now returns to her roots in student affairs.

Rojas received her Ph.D. in Interdisciplinary Studies with a concentration in Public Policy and Social Change from Union Institute & University in Ohio. She earned her Master's Degree at Syracuse University's Maxwell School of Public Administration and International Affairs, and her Bachelor of Science in Public Administration from UOG.

Interim associate dean, College of Natural and Applied Sciences

Dr. Maika Vuki is the new interim associate dean in the Colleges of Natural and Applied Sciences. He has spent 19 years as an instructor at UOG and 15 years at the University of South Pacific.

He has taught General Chemistry, Analytical Chemistry, and Physical Chemistry at the undergraduate level, and Environmental Chemistry and Electrochemistry at the graduate level. He chaired UOG's Chemistry Program for 14 years.

He holds a Ph.D. from the University of Southampton, a Master of Science in Chemistry from the University of Auckland, and a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of the South Pacific.

Interim associate director, Telecommunications and Distance Education, Online Learning

Professor Andrea Sant is the new interim associate director, Telecommunications and Distance Education, Online Learning. She joined UOG in 2006 where she has been teaching in the Division of English and Applied Linguistics. She has served as the program chair for DEAL and the Master of Arts in English Program as well as on the Faculty Senate and WASC Report Writing Team III.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Sant led the Online Teaching Resources (OTR) team in the creation of the I Meyeng UOG-Certified Online Teacher program, a 100-hour faculty development training series to enhance the University's capacity to teach online with Moodle.

Sant holds a Ph.D. in American Literature from Miami University (Ohio), A Master of Arts in American Literature from New Mexico State University, and a Bachelor of Arts in English Language and Literature from North Arizona University. ***(UOG)***

Ninth Circuit Civics Contest centers on legacy of *Brown v. Board of Education*

SAN FRANCISCO, California—2024 marks the 70th anniversary of the United States Supreme Court's 1954 landmark ruling on *Brown v. Board of Education* in which the unanimous court held that segregation in public schools is unconstitutional. The Ninth Circuit is pleased to announce that the 2024 Ninth Circuit Civics Contest is now accepting essay and video entries.

"70 Years Later—The Legacy of *Brown v. Board of Education*" is the theme of the 2024 Ninth Circuit Civics Contest, which is an annual essay and video competition open to students in grades 9-12 in public, private, parochial, charter schools and home-schooled students of equivalent grade status in nine western states, the U.S. territory of Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Children and relatives of federal court employees are not eligible to participate.

Students will have an opportunity to win cash prizes while learning about the legacy of the *Brown* decision. In addressing the theme, students are asked to discuss what impact they think *Brown* has had and why, in an essay of 500-1,000 words or in a 3-5-minute video. Contest rules are available on the civics contest website at https://www.ca9.uscourts.gov/civicscontest/.

Essay and video winners at the circuit level will share $11,400 in total cash prizes—$3,000 for first place, $1,700 for second place and $1,000 for third place. Furthermore, first-place winners at the circuit level will be invited to attend the 2024 Ninth Circuit Judicial Conference, where students will be recognized for their achievements and also participate in a special panel discussion with members of the bench and bar. Additionally, many students will have a chance to win cash prizes in local civics contests sponsored by federal courts throughout the Ninth Circuit that will select their winners, who will then advance as finalists at the circuit level.

The contest is sponsored by the Ninth Circuit's Public Information and Community Outreach Committee, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit and the federal courts that comprise the Ninth Circuit. "The committee encourages students to participate in this contest. It provides a unique opportunity for them to consider this important decision and then share their thoughts through creative writing or video production, while also learning about the role of the judicial branch in our American democracy," said Senior District Judge John Kronstadt, PICO chair, Central District of California.

The contest opened on Jan. 8, 2024. Essay and/or video entries can be submitted online on the civics contest website. Deadline to submit entries is 11:59pm Pacific Time, Friday, March 8, 2024. Finalists will be announced in May and the winners in June. ***(PR)***

Subcommittee examines Radewagen's HR 6062

WASHINGTON, D.C.— Delegate Uifa'atali Amata Radewagen (R-AS) welcomed the next step for her bill, H.R. 6062, as the Natural Resources Committee's Subcomittee on Indian and Insular Affairs examined her legislation with favorable testimony from expert witnesses.

Radewagen introduced H.R. 6062 on Oct. 25, to allow for American Samoa to enact constitutional changes as approved by the people without unnecessary additional procedures in Washington, a change which the Fono has called for in a resolution.

"I appreciate all the excellent witnesses, with excellent testimony from Lt. Gov. Talauega E.V. Ale and Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Insular and International Affairs Keone Nakoa, and input about Swain's Island from Delegate Su'a Alexander Jennings regarding that amendment," said Radewagen. "This was the next step toward getting our legislation passed, and I appreciate the Committee's work to have this good hearing, and IIA chair Harriet Hageman and ranking member Leger Fernandez."

Nakoa said, "The people of American Samoa have spoken, and we encourage this committee to take swift action to approve H.R. 6062

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Delegate Uifa'atali Amata Radewagen (R-A. Samoa) gives her statement in a hearing.

and Congress to pass the legislation. We also acknowledge the honorable representative from American Samoa in her consistent efforts to protect, enhance, and advance American Samoa's political development."

Talauega, representing Gov. Lemanu Peleti Mauga, expressed the American Samoa government's support: "I am reminded today of an ancient Samoan proverbial expression: *'Ia ō gatasi le futia ma le umele,'* meaning 'May both sides be unified in equal strength.' H.R. 6062 represents the inestimable value we place on our unity with the United States but also the equal importance we place on our Constitution and the protection of the Samoan way of life. For American Samoa, self-determination is an ongoing journey. Congress has of course been an essential part of that journey. We appreciate that

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From left, Delegate Uifa'atali Amata Radewagen (R-AS) Samoa), Delegate James Moylan (R-GU), Guam Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero, Congressman Joe Wilson (R-SC), former Guam delegate Madeleine Bordallo, Piti Mayor Jesse Alig, and Lt Gov. Talauega E.V. Ale.

and will continue to call on Congress to request what we need to keep making progress. What we need from Congress now is the same flexibility that Congress allows to all of the other territories to shape their own future under local law."

Radewagen also entered to the Congressional Record a letter from the Senate President and Speaker of the House of the American Samoan Legislature, in support of H.R. 6062 and in which they outline the long history our territory has had with the United States and the Secretary of Interior, and their desire to continue that relationship in a way that respects local self-determination.

In her statement, Radewagen said, "American Samoa has over 70 years of experience being able to work out problems and sustain a productive relationship with the Office of the Secretary. And the people of American Samoa know where we would go if the Secretary abused power. We would go to Congress and ask for intervention to help us protect our way of life if we ever needed."

She continued, "And now here we are in 2024, five proposed amendments ratified by the people are pending with the secretary, who has paused in taking action to give Congress a chance to avoid setting any unwanted precedents and to consider restoring the greater degree of self-determination we had before the 1983 bill. Thus, H.R. 6062, is a long overdue one-sentence technical amendment correcting the 1983 territorial spending act. But this time we are in regular order, and unlike 1983 the people of American Samoa are represented and have a seat at the table." ***(PR)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Delegate Uifa'atali Amata Radewagen (R-AS) at the hearing.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

American Samoa Lt. Gov. Talauega E.V. Ale.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Delegate Uifa'atali Amata Radewagen (R-A. Samoa) greets participants of the hearing.

EARTHQUAKE BRIEFS

6.2-magnitude earthquake in Pagan

At 1:48am on Jan. 21 2024, a report of a 6.2-magnitude earthquake occurred in the Pagan region, Northern Mariana Islands. Currently, there are no tsunami warnings or advisories that were issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center.

For more information, please contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at (670) 237-8000. ***(PR)***

4.8-magnitude earthquake in CNMI

At 11:10pm on Jan. 20 2024, a report of a 4.8-magnitude earthquake occurred in the Mariana Islands region. Currently, there are no tsunami warnings or advisories that were issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center.

For more information, please contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at (670) 237-8000. ***(PR)***

5.0-magnitude on Saipan

At 11pm on Jan. 17, 2024, a 5.0-magnitude earthquake occurred on Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. Currently, there are no tsunami warnings or advisories that were issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center.

For more information, please contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at (670) 237-8000. ***(PR)***

Rovin Bacani recognized on Utah Tech University dean's list

ST. GEORGE, Utah— Students at Utah Tech University demonstrated remarkable academic performance during the fall 2023 semester, with nearly 12% earning dean's list recognition.

A total of 1,489 students were included on the dean's list, reflecting their strong commitment to academics. To qualify, students had to achieve a semester GPA of 3.5 to 3.89 as well as complete at least 15 credits.

Rovin Bacani of Saipan was among the 1,489 students honored on the dean's list for the fall 2023 semester.

"I extend my heartfelt congratulations to all our dedicated students whose unwavering commitment and hard work have resulted in their well-deserved placement on the honor roll," Dr. Michael Lacourse, provost and vice president of academic affairs, said. "It is truly gratifying to witness our students seizing every opportunity at Utah Tech and achieving excellence. Their accomplishments reflect the spirit of perseverance and resilience that defines our educational community."

Bacani

Utah Tech University has experienced significant growth in the last five years, expanding its programs from 188 to 276, representing an incredible 47% increase. The university's diverse offerings include eight graduate, 57 bachelor's, 64 certificates, 48 minors, 76 emphases, and 23 associate degree programs.

Utah Tech University is a premier open-enrollment teaching institution that offers more than 275 academic programs at one of the lowest tuition costs in the Western United States. The university was built upon a rich tradition of determination and generosity that is still embraced by the campus community today. With the motto "active learning. active life." Utah Tech provides personalized and engaged learning experiences that prepare students for rewarding careers and enriched lives. Outside of the classroom, students have the opportunity to enjoy the unparalleled opportunities for an active life that accompany UT's location in beautiful Southern Utah. ***(PR)***

Guam POST Commission meeting on Jan. 26

The Guam P.O.S.T. (Peace Officer Standards & Training) Commission will hold a meeting on Friday, Jan. 26, 2024, 10:30am, at the Guam Community College in Room 112, Learning Resource Center, Building 4000.It is highly encouraged for all attendees to wear a mask on GCC campus.

Individuals requiring special accommodations, auxiliary aids, or services should contact (671) 735-5641 ext. 5594/5597. ***(GCC)***

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Airline incidents show a system under growing stress

For the air traveler, these have been worrying weeks. On Jan. 2, a Japan Airlines flight collided with a coast guard aircraft on the runway at Haneda Airport in Tokyo, killing five aboard the latter plane. Three days later, a fuselage panel blew off an Alaska Airlines flight from Oregon, causing a sudden cabin decompression and leading to a temporary grounding of some of Boeing Co.'s 737 Max 9 aircraft. The precise cause of that near-disaster is still to be determined. But following a spate of near-misses at US airports last year, both incidents underscore a sobering reality: The commercial aviation system is under growing stress.

One reason for the concern is that air traffic has soared in the aftermath of the pandemic. In the US, passenger volume likely exceeded all-time highs in 2023. An airline trade group expects 4.7 billion passengers worldwide next year, up from 4.5 billion pre-pandemic. Although air travel remains extremely safe, the added congestion has caused rising alarm among regulators. An independent review commissioned by the Federal Aviation Administration warned in November of an "erosion of safety margins that must be urgently addressed."

Two worries stand out. One is staffing. Thanks partly to the pandemic—which prompted layoffs and retirements, disrupted on-the-job training, and delayed certifications—a shortage of air-traffic controllers has plagued airports globally. In the US, the problem is acute: The FAA faces a shortage of about 3,000 controllers, while staffers report extended mandatory overtime, six-day workweeks, and widespread stress and fatigue.

An inspector general's report in June found that 77% of the agency's critical facilities were understaffed. "FAA continues to face staffing challenges without a plan to address them," the report said, "which in turn poses a risk to the continuity of air traffic operations."

A lack of technology poses another challenge. Midair, planes have highly effective collision-avoidance systems. On the ground is a different story. Some airports have instituted surface surveillance equipment to detect runway incursions and prevent accidents. But these systems are expensive, hard to maintain and far from universal. An analysis last month from the Flight Safety Foundation, a research group, found that "more than one-third of high-risk runway incursions could have been averted through better situational awareness technologies.

"Modernizing decades-old facilities and technical systems will require major investment. So will attracting and training much-needed staffers. But significant organization reforms should also be on the table. In the US, for instance, transferring management of the air-traffic-control system to a nonprofit or government corporation—while maintaining the FAA's regulatory oversight—would shield it from Congress's budgetary chaos, make it easier to hire competent staff and allow for long-term investments.

Similar arrangements in other countries, including much of Europe, have led to operational improvements without jeopardizing safety. The commercial aviation system is a wonder of the modern age. But as these recent incidents have shown, it can't be taken for granted. Keeping the flying public safe will require funding, forethought and no small amount of vigilance.

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Why are men so lonely?

By JEAN GUERRERO
Los Angeles Times

Jean Guerrero is an opinion columnist at the Los Angeles Times.

Few men will admit it, but it's true of most of them: They're lonely.

The epidemic of loneliness is hitting men hardest. Men are less skilled than women at making friends. Young men, who tend to be more progressive and are presumably more comfortable with intimacy than their elders, are in fact the most isolated.

A 2023 State of American Men report from Equimundo found that two-thirds of surveyed men between ages 18 and 23 say "no one really knows me." Since 1990, the share of men who lack a single close friend quintupled to 15%, according to a 2021 study by the Survey Center on American Life. It's worse for unmarried men: One in five of them report that they have no close friends. And 1 in every 4 of those younger than 30 say they have no close friends.

Why are men, especially young men, so lonely? It's an urgent question, as social isolation increases everything from extremism to early death. If traditional gender norms were solely to blame, Gen Zers wouldn't be struggling more than older men. One 2020 survey of men ages 16-99 in 237 countries found that young men in individualistic cultures (those that place high value on self-reliance, with loose social networks) were the loneliest.

Screen time is part of the problem, of course. Nearly half of American men say their online lives are more rewarding than their offline lives. The virtual world, with pornography and ideological provocation, is facilitating men's withdrawal. One in five Gen Z men trust the misogynist social media celebrity Andrew Tate.

But boys are retreating into the manosphere for a reason beyond the addictive nature of these technologies. They're seeking purpose in a changing world, one in which women are outpacing them in school and at work. Boys with progressive views of manhood feel the least purpose in life, according to Equimundo's survey.

Research suggests that boys wall themselves off from the world and their emotions when they feel punished for their vulnerability, including in progressive spaces where men's complaints and struggles are ridiculed and seen as a distraction from those of women.

Richard V. Reeves, author of "Of Boys and Men" and president of the American Institute for Boys and Men, believes that mainstream scorn for male grievances can inspire boys and men to seek solace in media figures like Tate.

Black and Latino boys and young men from low-income households are the loneliest and perhaps the most likely to be lured in by provocateurs. "They find answers online to the questions they would not even imagine raising around their own home," Reeves told me. He argues for more compassion, saying there are "too many wagging fingers and not enough helping hands."

Political hostility and culture wars have made it harder to be open. For men, who were socialized to silence loneliness and pain, the pressure to live behind a mask can be the most paralyzing.

It starts halfway through pre-K, according to Judy Chu, author of "When Boys Become Boys." Many boys arrive in school full of tenderness toward others and with a capacity to shed tears. As they grow older and see the stigma of showing vulnerability, they learn to numb their emotions. This can create a lifelong difficulty in building and nurturing friendships. Even in many progressive environments, boys get the message to man up and shut up.

"We say we value emotional expressivity in men, but we tend to devalue men who express their emotions," Chu told me. "So that kind of hypocrisy makes it really hard for boys and men to take that leap."

She and other experts believe we all need to construct spaces where young men can safely express emotions—for instance, with boys' groups at schools. Ashanti Branch, a youth mentor and founder of the California-based Ever Forward Club, encourages boys to reckon with their buried feelings. "They're hungry to just be heard and seen and be themselves," he told me.

The rise of men's support groups reflects this need. In L.A., Adam Dorsey, a 41-year-old yoga instructor, created a men's group with a friend after they realized how helpful it was to work out and talk during the pandemic. In the meetings, the men sit in a circle and share their struggles after some exercise and breathwork. Dorsey encourages them to ask each other questions rather than give advice. "We are here to bridge the polarity of the masculine and feminine on the planet," he told me.

Feminists' suspicion of all-male spaces and male bonding rituals makes sense given their sexist history. But today, these spaces can make men stronger allies of women. When men support each other, it relieves women of the burden of their emotional labor. And it can teach men reciprocity and listening skills.

Because men feel more comfortable making friends and catching up when there's an event such as watching sports or lifting weights, it can be helpful for them to join a men's group or pick up new hobbies with weekly meet-ups.

Bumble BFF, the dating app's friendly spinoff, can also facilitate friendships. But many men approach it with homophobic biases, since our culture tends to sexualize male vulnerability. Reddit threads are full of unsubstantiated claims that the app is overrun with "undercover gays."

Given these inhibitions, it's no surprise that just 1 in 5 men have received emotional support from a friend in the past week, compared with 41% of women. But men can relearn how to be close to others, particularly with some empathy and help from all of us.

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

A test for higher education is whether it uses the SAT

By JAY AMBROSE
Tribune News Service

Jay Ambrose is an op-ed columnist for Tribune News Service. Readers may email him at speaktojay@aol.com.

Surely, you've heard of the SAT, a standardized test once widely used by colleges and universities to figure out whether a student applicant is up to the challenges of higher education. Or maybe you haven't heard of them because our academic betters feared they weren't fair to the disadvantaged, as worrisome as the whole idea of merit, and they have been disappearing from the scene.

Well, let's say thank you to The New York Times for a front-page story saying, look, some people who know what they are doing have been running exhaustive tests that prove beyond an educated doubt that they work and work beautifully. It is simply the case that people who do well on the tests usually do well in the classroom and that those who don't do well on the tests have far less chance of making the grades that allow for graduation.

The degree to which the tests work appears to be utterly amazing, and guess what. They are a benefit to minorities and young people from low-income families because they identify those who can get the academic job done. High school grades? Don't count on them. In order to be nicer to students, too many teachers are betraying them with grades they do not deserve, which actually is misleading and not nice at all. The tests also seem to identify those who are and are not fit for elite institutions, according to the Times.

To me, these studies and their results can just maybe be a large benefit in a society that more and more seems to think objectivity is a joke and that the way to help those in the most need is to give them something they cannot handle. That can be a means of betrayal, a way of reducing someone's efforts because of a signal that good things will happen anyway or directing someone in directions portending failure. When carried to the extreme of placing someone in a career beyond his or her abilities, it can mean damage and hurt to others inadequately served. It also fails to recognize there are meaningful undertakings requiring different kinds of talents.

I do think the Times article is on the right track in sharing observations that, as important as the SAT may be, it should not be the whole story in admissions decisions. There are all kinds of personality and character traits worth consideration even if such discernments can be difficult. Self-awareness of possible prejudice is worth careful thought. But the belittlement of merit in today's world, seeing it as somehow fraudulent, just an excuse for unfair discrimination or of minor importance is the road to disfunction hurting everyone.

The obvious issue is assuming merit where there is none or at least not all that much. That's why the vast number of comparisons of SAT tests with actual higher education performances is so important. To disregard the findings is to disregard those who deserve attention, people who also have their needs in this life and who can make other lives better.

It does not follow that those who do poorly on them are inferior souls or minus a wide range of opportunities.

Your child's favorite teacher may soon be a chatbot

By TYLER COWEN
Bloomberg Opinion

Tyler Cowen is a Bloomberg Opinion *columnist, a professor of economics at George Mason University and host of the* Marginal Revolution *blog.*

Most students have a favorite teacher. In the future, could that teacher be … a chatbot? The answer depends in part on whether AI succeeds in becoming the next great educational technology innovation, or joins the long list of ed-tech disappointments.

Two kinds of AI-driven education are likely to take off, and they will have very different effects. Both approaches have real promise, but neither will make everyone happy.

The first category will resemble learning platforms such as Khan Academy, Duolingo, GPT-4, and many other services. Over time, these sources will become more multimedia, quicker in response, deeper in their answers, and better at in creating quizzes, exercises and other feedback. For those with a highly individualized learning style—preferring videos to text, say, or wanting lessons slower or faster—the AIs will oblige. The price will be relatively low; Khan Academy currently is free and GPT-4 costs $20 a month, and those markets will become more competitive.

For those who want it, they will be able to access a kind of universal tutor as envisioned by Neal Stephenson in his novel "The Diamond Age." But how many people will really want to go this route? My guess is that it will be a clear minority of the population, well below 50%, whether at younger or older age groups.

To see why, consider other current options, such as watching YouTube to master scientific or mathematical knowledge (usually free), reading old editions of textbooks (cheap on Amazon), or hiring an expert tutor (more expensive). None of those approaches is currently very popular. People may resort to these services if their education requires it, but otherwise they are not taking advantage of these opportunities even when they are free. They will go to their graves not knowing about entanglement problems in quantum mechanics.

Chatbots will probably make education more fun, but for most people there is a limit to just how fun instruction can be. These kinds of AIs will appeal to the infovores, but most people still will prefer interacting with friends and family—a known and usually cheap source of fun, not unlike listening to music or daydreaming. Educational chatbots won't be more fun and fulfilling than what you would choose to do with that time on your own.

Experience with YouTube, which most people use, is the best reason to be optimistic about the future of AI tutoring bots. Yet a lot of people use YouTube for fairly specific purposes: to answer how-to questions (reboot their iPad, fix a flat tire, etc.), to watch and listen to music, or just to hear people talking for fun (PewDiePie).

All of which is to say: These kinds of AI chatbots might replace teachers to some degree, and give more individualized feedback. But they won't significantly increase the total time spent learning.

There is, however, another way AI education could go—and it may end up far more widespread, even if it makes some people uneasy. Imagine a chatbot programmed to be your child's friend. It would be exactly the kind of friend your kid wants, even (you hope) the kind of friend your kid needs. Your child might talk with this chatbot for hours each day.

Over time, these chatbots would indeed teach children valuable things, including about math and science. But it would happen slowly, subtly. When I was in high school, I had two close (human) friends with whom I often talked economics. We learned a lot from each other, but we were friends first and foremost, and the conversations grew out of that. As it turns out, all three of us ended up becoming professional economists.

This could be the path the most popular and effective AI chatbots follow: the "friendship first" model. Under that scenario, an AI chatbot doesn't have to be more fun than spending time with friends, because it is itself a kind of friend. Through a kind of osmosis, the child could grow interested in some topics raised by the AI chatbot, and the chatbot could feed the child more information and inspiration in those areas. But friendship would still come first.

Many parents will undoubtedly find it weird for their children to be so close to chatbots. Some may even forbid any relationship at all, as they do now with a human they deem a bad influence. Nevertheless, the friendship-first model is the most promising formula for AI-driven education. And the larger question may be not whether it will work, but how comfortable parents are with it.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Passing the torch

Greetings,

Thanks to you, the people of the Northern Mariana Islands, I have had the extraordinary opportunity and most humbling responsibility over almost 16 years to be your voice and to represent your interests in the U.S. Congress.

My love for the Marianas remains strong. But the time has come to pass this responsibility to a new representative the people will elect this November.

This decision comes after deep personal examination and consultation with Andrea, my loved ones and supporters.

And it is not because I have accomplished everything I wanted for the people of our islands. The work is far from done.

But I will leave Congress believing I have been able to establish the Northern Mariana Islands as a respected member of the American political family.

When as a young man I stood in the U.S. Capitol in 1986 and promised myself, if the Marianas ever had a place in the institution, I would strive to be elected. I never imagined I would be our first representative or be able to serve so long.

The people of the Marianas gave me this singular honor. I believe I have served you well. And I will be forever grateful.

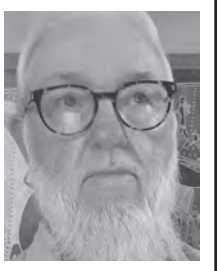
May God bless us all.

Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan
Member of Congress

SENESCENT SONNETS

AI Rumors of Boomer Humor

LITERARY NOOK
By JOEY CONNOLLY
Special to the Saipan Tribune



Joey aka Pepe Batbon Connolly is a retired educator who taught in the CNMI, NOLA, and LVNV. He is a sonnet practitioner who enjoys stargazing.

AI Course: Knotoo Swift, One Oh Won

Taylor Swift named *Time magazine* Person of the Year
she's reissuing old albums and bringing in some new
media proclaims '2023 Taylor Swift's Year' is here
there seems to be nothing that Taylor Swift can't do.

Harvard University will offer a course on Taylor Swift
it will be on singing and songwriting by the superstar
I offer a course parody about her, now don't get miffed
it is free, take it at home, on your phone, or in your car.

My parody course hero is Knotoo Swift, not too swift
you learn about an AI Swift entertainer and lookalike
robot that follows money, moves, and mock songs too
it performs worldwide in stadiums and on a bike trike.

It is an AI attempt to poke fun and mimic Taylor Swift
its humor and pitfalls may give T.S fans a comic lift.

My AI and Why It Is Going Fast

So about my AI I have begun to wonder why
my AI initials stand for Aging Intelligence
here's a senescent report on it, I'll give it a try
my doggerel thanks you for your indulgence.

So what about a senior's intelligence as it ages
as their neural synapses slow their connections
and senile dementia onset sneaks up in stages
recalling some memories experiences rejection.

Arthritis neck to toe and spinal degeneration
body resistance to pills and needle injection
combinations of these for the senior generation
as our memories become a murky reflection.

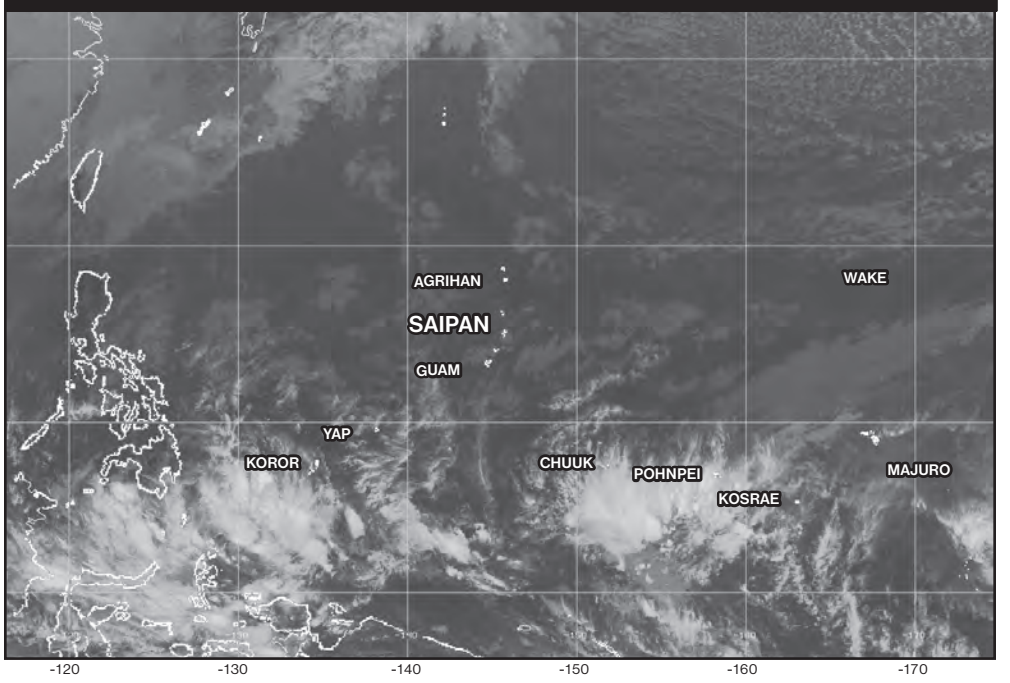
Growing old and forgetting contains unpleasance
all a part of our aging intelligence senescence.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated light showers. Northeast winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly sunny with a 20 percent chance of showers. Northeast winds 15 to 20 mph.	Mostly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.	Mostly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.	Mostly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.
85 76°	85 76°	85 76°	85 76°	85 76°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 8:32 AM SUNDAY, JANUARY 21, 2024

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Fresh to strong winds with near-gale gusts prevail in the region. Satellite imagery indicates open-cell stratocumulus moving across from the northeast across the waters. The buoys indicate seas are about 11 to 14 feet.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: https://www.weather.gov/gum/

MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	85° / 76°
Palau	Thunderstorms	86° / 77°
Yap	Thunderstorms	85° / 78°
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	86° / 79°
Pohnpei	Partly Cloudy	85° / 77°
Kosrae	Partly Cloudy	84° / 78°
Majuro	Partly Cloudy	86° / 80°

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Mostly Cloudy/Wind	67° / 57°
Beijing	Mostly Sunny	39° / 19°
Hong Kong	Mostly Sunny	63° / 55°
Honolulu	Showers	80° / 71°
London	Showers	52° / 39°
Los Angeles	Sunny	79° / 52°
Manila	Thunderstorms	83° / 76°
Melbourne	Sunny	76° / 54°
Miami	Partly Cloudy	75° / 64°
New York	Partly Cloudy	38° / 27°
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	46° / 31°
Paris	Cloudy	53° / 46°
Busan	Mostly Sunny	50° / 42°
Rome	Cloudy	56° / 50°
Salem	Partly Cloudy	60° / 43°
San Francisco	Sunny	61° / 45°
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	43° / 27°
Tokyo	Sunny	46° / 34°
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	40° / 26°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:47 AM	6:09 PM
Tuesday	6:47 AM	6:10 PM
Wednesday	6:47 AM	6:10 PM
Thursday	6:47 AM	6:11 PM
Friday	6:46 AM	6:11 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	3:38 AM	3:00 PM
Tuesday	-	4:35 AM	3:54 PM
Wednesday	-	5:30 AM	4:50 PM
Thursday	-	6:20 AM	5:45 PM
Friday	-	7:06 AM	6:38 PM

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
7:02 AM	High Tide	1.53
11:41 AM	Low Tide	1.19
4:18 PM	High Tide	1.62
-	-	-

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 1, 2024

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA076	9:50AM	10:35AM	Daily

SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)

UA824	7:05AM	9:45AM	1, 3, 5

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	Daily
UA193	7:50PM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Palau
UA183	7:55PM	9:50PM	Daily

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/703	3:10AM	10:30PM	4, 7 via ICN
7C3403/2305	4:40AM	10:20PM	Daily
UA076/183	9:50AM	9:50PM	Daily via Guam
UA076/193	9:50AM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

TW308	2:15AM	6:10AM	Daily
OZ626	3:10AM	6:55AM	4,7
7C3403	4:40AM	8:35AM	Daily
7C3405	4:35PM	8:25PM	Daily

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	8:00AM	8:45AM	Daily

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

UA825	9:25PM	2:00AM+1	2, 4, 7

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA189	00:40AM	6:30AM	3, 6
PR110	10:05PM	3:55AM+1	Daily
UA192	10:40PM	6:30AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
UA184	10:55PM	4:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA189/174	00:40AM	8:45AM+1	3, 6 via Guam
OZ702/625	12:05PM	1:40AM+1	3, 6 via ICN
UA192/174	10:40PM	8:45AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
UA184/174	10:55PM	8:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6,7 via Guam
7C2306/3406	11:15PM	3:30PM+1	Daily

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3406	10:10AM	3:30PM	Daily
TW307	7:45PM	1:15AM+1	Daily
7C3404	10:15PM	3:35AM+1	Daily
OZ625	8:20PM	1:40AM+1	3, 6

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 2, 2024

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	SAIPAN	ROTA	08:30	09:00	Daily
1302	SAIPAN	ROTA	10:30	11:00	Daily
1303	SAIPAN	ROTA	15:30	16:00	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	ROTA	SAIPAN	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	ROTA	SAIPAN	11:30	12:00	Saturday & Sunday
3103	ROTA	SAIPAN	13:30	14:00	Monday To Friday
3104	ROTA	SAIPAN	16:30	17:00	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	ROTA	GUAM	11:30	12:00	Monday To Friday

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	GUAM	ROTA	12:30	13:00	Monday To Friday

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1201	SAIPAN	TINIAN	7:30	7:45	Daily
1202	SAIPAN	TINIAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	SAIPAN	TINIAN	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	SAIPAN	TINIAN	10:00	10:15	Daily
1206	SAIPAN	TINIAN	14:00	14:15	Daily
1207	SAIPAN	TINIAN	15:00	15:15	Daily
1208	SAIPAN	TINIAN	16:00	16:15	Daily
1209	SAIPAN	TINIAN	17:00	17:15	Daily

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2101	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
2102	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	TINIAN	SAIPAN	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	TINIAN	SAIPAN	10:30	10:45	Daily
2106	TINIAN	SAIPAN	14:30	14:45	Daily
2107	TINIAN	SAIPAN	15:30	15:45	Daily
2108	TINIAN	SAIPAN	16:30	16:45	Daily
2109	TINIAN	SAIPAN	17:30	17:45	Daily

Business

Simple Cafe opens inside 99 Cents

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
EDITOR

Simple Cafe has opened inside 99 Cents Supermarket in Garapan.

The coffee shop began selling snacks and a variety of hot food and cold drinks just before last Christmas in November 2023, according to owner Edith Villamena.

Simple Café's menu includes sandwiches and Filipino delicacies such as puto, kutsinta, buchi, maja, siomai, siopao, pancit, and many more.

The new café and snack bar also offers drinks such as fresh fruit/vegetables juices, smoothies, iced coffee, dalgona coffee, matcha latte, Thai milk tea, among others.

Villamena said during the first couple of months of operation, their family-owned business has attracted some loyal customers who can't get enough of their freshly baked pandesal, arroz caldo, iced coffee, and halo-halo.

"Simple Cafe is different from other cafes on Saipan because we offer a homemade-cooking style for breakfast and lunch bento. We decided to include lunch in our menu due to customers' suggestions," she said.

While mainly a takeout operation, Simple Cafe also has several tables and seats that can accommodate seven to eight dine-in customers.

Asked why open a business in still uncertain economic times, Villamena said a food business, as long as its tasty and affordable, will always attract its fair share of customers.

"We decided to open a business even at this tough time because we believe food is a human necessity whatever the season. When people get hungry, they will buy food to eat," she said.

Simple Café is open from Monday to Saturday, 6am-6pm and from 2pm to 6pm on Sunday (snacks and drinks only). Customers can contact them at (670) 588-6044 or message them via their Facebook page, Instagram, and WhatsApp.

MARK RABAGO

Simple Café is open from Monday to Saturday, 6am-6pm and from 2pm to 6pm on Sunday (snacks and drinks only).

MARK RABAGO

Simple Café's menu includes sandwiches and Filipino delicacies such as puto, kutsinta, buchi, maja, siomai, siopao, pancit, and many more.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Simple Café's pancit.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Simple Café's buchi tray.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

US China official conclude meeting on financial issues

BANGKOK (AP)—U.S. and Chinese officials have completed the third meeting of a working group established to cooperate on financial issues, in a step that continues the trend set by the two powers last November to ease tensions. Officials from the U.S. Department of the Treasury met with counterparts in the People's Bank of China to discuss issues ranging from financial stability to countering money laundering. The delegation also met with Vice Premier He Lifeng while they were in China, according to a statement from the Treasury Department Friday. The group also indicated that Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen would return to China for a visit at some point in the future. She was previously there in July. In November, Yellen met with He in San Francisco. Their two-day meeting was seen as paving the way for the later meeting between U.S. President Joe Biden and China's President Xi Jinping. The two sides in November had agreed to resume cooperation on issues such as curbing fentanyl's spread, as well as military-to-military communication. While the meeting kept the relationship from getting any worse, it failed to resolve any of the major differences between the two countries.

Wayfair and Macy's are cutting thousands of jobs as retail layoffs deepen

NEW YORK (AP)—Retail layoffs are hitting especially hard this week. Online furniture seller Wayfair is cutting about 1,650 jobs, or 13% of its global workforce. Macy's is laying off about 3.5% of its total headcount, which amounts to roughly 2,350 employees, and the iconic department store is closing five locations. Wayfair announced its latest job cuts Friday. The restructuring will reduce team sizes across the company and reduce seniority in certain roles with the company planning to "rebuild with modified leveling" this year, CEO and co-founder Niraj Shah said. "The natural question is to ask 'Why?'" he wrote in a Friday memo to employees. "I think the reality is that we went overboard in hiring during a strong economic period and veered away from our core principles, and while we have come quite far back to them, we are not quite there." In January of last year, Wayfair laid off about 1,750 employees—representing 10% of its global workforce at the time. It cut 870 jobs in August 2022, and 550 jobs in 2020. Friday's job cuts are expected to bring annualized cost savings of more than $280 million, Wayfair said. The company anticipates incurring about $70 million to $80 million in restructuring costs, mostly for employee severance and benefits, primarily in the first quarter of 2024. Macy's confirmed layoffs to The Associated Press via email—with the New York company saying it made the difficult decision as it prepares "to deploy a new strategy to meet the needs of an everchanging consumer and marketplace." The five stores to be closed are located in Arlington, Virginia (Ballston); San Leandro, California (Bay Fair); Lihue, Hawaii (Kukui Grove); Simi Valley, California (Simi Valley Town Center); and Tallahassee, Florida (Governor's Square), according to a spokesperson for Macy's Inc.

2023 was slowest year for US home sales in nearly 30 years

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Sales of previously occupied U.S. homes sank in 2023 to a nearly 30-year low, as sharply higher mortgage rates, rising prices and a persistently low level of homes on the market combined to push homeownership out of reach for many Americans.

The National Association of Realtors said Friday that existing U.S. home sales totaled 4.09 million last year, an 18.7% decline from 2022. That is the weakest year for home sales since 1995 and the biggest annual decline since 2007, the start of the housing slump of the late 2000s.

The median national home price for all of last year edged up just under 1% to record high $389,800, the NAR said.

Last year's home sales slump echoes the nearly 18% annual decline in 2022, when mortgage rates began rising, eventually more than doubling by the end of the year. That trend continued in 2023, driving the average rate on a 30-year mortgage by late October to 7.79%, the highest level since late 2000.

The sharply higher home loan borrowing costs limited home hunters' buying power on top of years of soaring prices. A dearth of homes for sale also kept many would-be homebuyers and sellers on the sidelines.

Still, a pullback in mortgage rates since late last year, and forecasts calling for a further rate declines this year, is fueling hopes that home sales will begin to bounce back from their dismal showing in 2023.

"The latest month's sales look to be the bottom before inevitably turning higher in the new year," said Lawrence Yun, the NAR's chief economist. "Mortgage rates are meaningfully lower compared to just two months ago, and more inventory is expected to appear on the market in upcoming months."

Mortgage rates have been mostly easing since November, echoing a pullback in the 10-year Treasury yield, which lenders use as a guide to pricing loans. The yield has largely come down on hopes that inflation has cooled enough for the Federal Reserve to shift to cutting interest rates this year.

The average rate on a 30-year home loan was 6.6% this week, according to mortgage buyer Freddie Mac. If rates continue to ease, as many economists expect, that should help boost demand heading into the spring homebuying season, which traditionally begins in late February.

Nation

Brutally cold weather reaching deep into lower United States

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP)—Arctic weather brought more misery to much of the U.S. on Saturday, especially for people unaccustomed to such bitter cold in places like Memphis, Tennessee, where residents were urged to boil water and some had no water at all after freezing temperatures broke water mains across the city. Temperatures weren't expected to rise until after the weekend.

The bracing cold followed a week of storms blamed for at least 67 deaths around the U.S., many involving hypothermia or road accidents.

At the Four Way Grill in Memphis, owner Patrice Bates Thompson said the water problems have closed their soul food kitchen for days.

"This is our staple, and this is what basically drives the force of my family financially," Thompson told Fox-13 Memphis. "We depend on business, and we have been at home."

So many pipes broke in Memphis that water pressure fell throughout the city. Concerned about possible contamination, Memphis Light, Gas & Water urged its more than 400,000 customers to boil water for drinking or teeth-brushing or use bottled supplies on Saturday while crews worked around the clock to make repairs.

"Our production and treatment of water is working well," the utility said in an email. "We cannot give restoration estimates until all leaks are identified."

The utility said more than 100 employees volunteered Saturday to identify breaks, and residents were urged to report leaks in the street, at homes and in unoccupied buildings.

Without water since Thursday morning, Pamela Wells was visited Saturday by a worker who asked whether they had a leak.

"My husband said, 'How can we have a leak, if we don't have any water?'" she said.

They had filled a bathtub with water to flush toilets with when they noticed the pressure dropping, Wells said. For everything else they were using a dwindling supply of bottled water until their street became passable on Saturday and friends brought in fresh supplies.

"It's been a struggle," she said, recalling how they lost water for a 10-day stretch in December 2022. "You don't know how long it'll be out."

Meanwhile, the Memphis City Council opened seven bottled water distribution stations on Saturday, one in each council district. Two others were operating at fire stations. One had 300 cars lined up when it opened on Saturday, Shelby County Emergency Management Director Brenda Jones said in a telephone interview.

"You have people with absolutely no water, people with low water pressure, and you have the boil water advisory," she said.

A huge swath of the U.S. was under wind chill advisories, from Montana into central Florida. It was particularly harsh in the Midwest. The wind made it feel like minus 16 degrees (minus 26 Celsius) in Iowa City on Saturday, and overnight wind chills hovered around zero in Oklahoma City, where David Overholser sought shelter at the non-profit Homeless Alliance.

AP

A man warms his hands by the fire he created across the street from a homeless encampment under a major interstate freeway Tuesday, Jan. 16, 2024, in Chicago.

GOP Speaker Mike Johnson has House majority in name only

WASHINGTON (AP)—New Speaker Mike Johnson finds himself leading House Republicans with a majority in name only.

Unable to unite his unruly right flank and commanding one of the slimmest House majorities in history, Johnson is being forced to rely on Democrats for the basics of governing, including the latest bill to prevent a federal shutdown.

Approaching his first 100 days on the job, Johnson faces daunting choices ahead. He can try to corral conservatives, who are pushing rightward in endless hours of closed-door meetings, to work together as a team. Or he can keep reaching out to Democrats for a bipartisan coalition to pass compromise legislation.

So far, rather than the speaker of a dysfunctional GOP majority, Johnson, R-La., has shown he is willing to compile a rare, large supermajority of Democrats and Republicans to get things done with Democratic President Joe Biden.

And that supermajority is exactly what some in Congress want, but others fear is coming.

"Everyone understands the reality of where we are," Johnson said at a weekly news conference.

"The House Republicans have the second-smallest majority in history," he said. "We're not going to get everything that we want. But we're going to stick to our core conservative principles."

Johnson is about as conservative as they come in Washington. He's a "movement" conservative steeped in Christian beliefs who made his way from Louisiana working in the trenches of hard-right social policy, particularly against abortion, gay rights and other issues.

Elected in 2016, Johnson has become aligned with Donald Trump who won the White House that year, and Johnson led a key legal challenge for Trump in 2020 trying to overturn Biden's election.

For now, the far-right forces that ousted Johnson's predecessor, former Rep. Kevin McCarthy of California, from the speaker's office, are allowing a grace period. They are frustrated by Johnson's reluctance to take dramatic action such as a government shutdown to win their priorities. But they are heartened that at least Johnson is forthcoming with them.

But the hard-line Republicans are watching and waiting—any single lawmaker can file a motion for a vote to oust the speaker—especially as Johnson confronts the challenges ahead on government spending, U.S. border security and wars in Ukraine and Gaza.

"It's a loss for the American people to join hands with Democrats to form a governing coalition," said Virginia Rep. Bob Good, the newly elected chairman of the hard-right House Freedom Caucus, after last week's vote to keep government running.

Good complained that passage of the short-term spending bill, which Biden signed into law before the Friday midnight deadline, was "a failure."

Johnson will confront another shutdown threat March 1 when some of the temporary funding again runs out.

More immediately, Johnson and House Republicans are warily watching Senate negotiations over an immigration and border security package designed to reduce the record flow of migrants and expedite the deportations of some of those who have already entered the United States illegally.

Biden is considering the emerging border deal as part of his broader $110 billion national security package, which has grown urgent as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's forces need to replenish weaponry in their fight against Russia's invasion.

But such a deal swapping border policy for Ukraine aid could be politically devastating for Johnson, whose Trump-aligned Republicans want an even harder line against the migrants at the U.S-Mexico border and a more isolationist approach to U.S. foreign policy that rejects Ukraine aid.

Biden hosted congressional leaders at the White House this past week, surrounding the new speaker with prominent and influential voices, including the chairmen of the national security committees, to impress on Johnson the weight of the challenges ahead.

It put the speaker in a central seat of U.S. power.

The top Democrat on the House Armed Services Committee, Rep. Adam Smith of Washington state, spoke up at one point during the White House meeting. He made a pitch to Johnson.

"The argument I made to him was, 'You know, the border is not going to be 'solved,'" Smith recalled.

Smith told Johnson there is no "magic piece of legislation" that will suddenly end the countless numbers of migrants pouring northward.

Election-year politics threaten Senate border deal as Trump and his allies rally opposition

WASHINGTON (AP)—A politically treacherous dynamic is taking hold as negotiators in Congress work to strike a bipartisan deal on the border and immigration, with vocal opposition from the hard right and former President Donald Trump threatening to topple the carefully negotiated compromise.

Senators are closing in on the details of an agreement on border measures that could unlock Republican support for Ukraine aid and hope to unveil it as soon as next week. But the deal is already wobbling, as House Speaker Mike Johnson faces intense pressure from Trump and his House allies to demand more sweeping concessions from Democrats and the White House.

"I do not think we should do a Border Deal, at all, unless we get EVERYTHING needed to shut down the INVASION of Millions & Millions of people," Trump posted on social media this week.

It's a familiar political dynamic, one that has repeatedly thwarted attempts to reform U.S. immigration law, including in 2013 when House Republicans sought to pin illegal immigration on a Democratic president and in 2018 when Trump helped sink another bipartisan effort. The path for legislation this time around is further clouded by an election year in which Trump has once again made railing against illegal immigration a central focus of his campaign.

Even though the terms of the policy negotiations have shifted significantly in the Republicans' direction, skepticism is running high among conservatives, creating a precarious moment that could determine not only the contours of U.S. immigration and border law for years to come, but the future of Ukraine as it faces dwindling U.S. supplies in its fight against Russia.

President Joe Biden is pressing lawmakers to say yes. During a White House meeting this week with congressional leaders that was meant to underscore how desperately Ukraine needs funding, the president said he was ready for a "big deal on the border."

The president has reason to want an agreement. The historic number of migrants who have come to the U.S. border with Mexico during Biden's term is seen as one of the largest political vulnerabilities in his re-election campaign.

During Iowa's Republican caucuses last week, which Trump won, immigration was a top issue. An AP VoteCast survey found about 9 in 10 caucusgoers backed building a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border, with about 7 in 10 expressing strong support for the idea.

Asia

ASIAN BRIEFS

Pakistani retaliatory strikes in Iran kill at least 9, raising tensions along border

ISLAMABAD (AP)—Pakistan launched airstrikes against alleged militant hideouts inside Iran on Thursday, killing at least nine people as it retaliated for a similar attack days earlier by Iran and raising tensions with its neighbor as conflict across the region escalates. The unprecedented attacks by both Pakistan and Iran on either side of their border appeared to target Baluch militant groups with similar separatist goals. The countries accuse each other of providing a haven to the groups in their respective territories. The flare-up between Iran and Pakistan comes as the Middle East remains unsettled by Israel's war with Hamas in the Gaza Strip, and on the heels of Iranian airstrikes late Monday in Iraq and Syria. Those airstrikes were in response to a suicide bombing in Iran by Islamic State militants in early January that killed over 90 people. Iran and nuclear-armed Pakistan have long regarded each other with suspicion over militant attacks, but analysts say this week's tit-for-tat strikes were at least partially prompted by internal political pressures.

China, PH agree to lower tensions on South China Sea confrontations

BANGKOK (AP)—China and the Philippines said they have agreed to work on lowering tensions after a year of public and tense confrontations in the South China Sea between their ships that have raised concerns of armed engagement in the region. China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said Thursday that the two sides agreed to continue to improve communication and use friendly negotiations to manage their differences at sea, "especially to manage well the situation at Ren'Ai reef." Ren'Ai reef is the Chinese name for what the Philippines call Ayungin Shoal and the U.S. calls the Second Thomas Shoal, the site of multiple confrontations between the two countries' ships in recent months. In November, Manila said that a Chinese coast guard ship and accompanying vessels conducted dangerous maneuvers and blasted a Philippine supply ship with a water cannon in disputed waters. China disputed the account, saying it acted appropriately.

China and the Philippines said they agreed to limit tensions at a meeting on the South China Sea on Wednesday in Shanghai, the eighth in a series that began in 2017.

N. Korea stresses alignment with Russia against US and says Putin could visit at an 'early date'

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korea said Sunday it has agreed to further strategic and tactical cooperation with Russia to establish a "new multi-polarized international order," as the two countries work to build a united front in the face of their separate, intensifying tensions with the United States. In describing North Korean Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui's meetings with Russian President Vladimir Putin and Foreign Minster Sergey Lavrov in Moscow last week, the North's Foreign Ministry said Putin also reaffirmed his willingness to visit Pyongyang and said that could come at an "early date." North Korea has been actively strengthening its ties with Russia, highlighted by leader Kim Jong Un's September visit to Russia for a summit with Putin. Kim is trying to break out of diplomatic isolation and strengthen his footing as he navigates a deepening nuclear standoff with Washington, Seoul and Tokyo. In a separate statement on Sunday, the North's Foreign Ministry condemned the U.N. Security Council for calling an emergency meeting over the country's latest ballistic test, which state media described as a new intermediate-range solid-fuel missile tipped with a hypersonic warhead. The ministry said the test-firing on Jan. 14 was among the country's regular activities to improve its defense capabilities and that it didn't pose a threat to its neighbors.

Japan signs agreement to purchase 400 Tomahawk missiles as US envoy lauds its defense buildup

TOKYO (AP)—Japan signed a deal with the United States on Thursday to purchase up to 400 Tomahawk cruise missiles as part of its ongoing military buildup in response to increased regional threats. Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's government has pledged to double its annual defense spending to around 10 trillion yen ($68 billion) by 2027, which would make Japan the world's third-biggest military spender after the United States and China. Defense Minister Minoru Kihara announced in December a decision to accelerate deployment of some Tomahawks and Japanese-made Type 12 surface-to-ship missiles beginning in fiscal year 2025, a year before the original plan. The government says Japan is facing its "severest" security environment since World War II because of threats from China and North Korea, causing it to increase military cooperation with the U.S., Australia, Britain and other friendly nations. In November, the U.S. approved a $2.35 billion sale of two types of Tomahawks—200 Block IV missiles and 200 upgraded Block V versions. They can be launched from warships and hit targets 1,600 kilometers (1,000 miles) away, officials said. The signing of the purchase agreement on Thursday was attended by Kihara and U.S. Ambassador to Japan Rahm Emanuel. Japan and the United States agreed to expedite the deployment "in response to the increasingly severe security environment," Kihara said. Emanuel said training of Japanese servicemembers for the Tomahawks will start in March.

15 students and 1 teacher drown when a boat capsizes in a lake in western India

NEW DELHI (AP)—A boat carrying a school group capsized in a lake in western India on Thursday, drowning 15 students and one teacher, fire service officials said. Eleven students were rescued when the boat capsized in Harani Lake in the city of Vadodara, and rescuers were searching for person who was still missing, Vadodara fire officer Jitu Parmar said. The cause of the accident is being investigated. "The incident of children drowning after the boat capsized in Vadodara's Harani Lake is extremely heartbreaking," said the state's top elected official Bhupendrabhai Patel. Vadodara is a city known for the diamond trade in Gujarat state. Indian media reports said the students there were on a picnic when the accident occurred. Boating accidents are common in India, where many vessels are overcrowded and have inadequate safety equipment. Last September, 22 people drowned when a double-decker boat carrying more than 30 passengers capsized near a beach at a coastal town of Kerala state in southern India. In May 2018, 30 people died when their boat capsized on the swollen Godavari River in the southern state of Andhra Pradesh.

World

Netanyahu rejects Palestinian sovereignty in a post-war Gaza

JERUSALEM (AP)—Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Saturday that he "will not compromise on full Israeli control" over Gaza and that "this is contrary to a Palestinian state," rejecting U.S. President Joe Biden's suggestion that creative solutions could bridge wide gaps between the leaders' views on Palestinian statehood.

In a sign of the pressures Netanyahu's government faces at home, thousands of Israelis protested in Tel Aviv calling for new elections, and others demonstrated outside the prime minister's house, joining families of the more than 100 remaining hostages held by Hamas and other militants. They fear that Israel's military activity further endangers hostages' lives.

Netanyahu is also under heat to appease members of his right-wing ruling coalition by intensifying the war against Hamas, which governs Gaza, while contending with calls for restraint from the United States, its closest ally.

Netanyahu posted his statement on social media a day after his first conversation with Biden in nearly a month. Discussing his administration's position Friday, Biden said "there are a number of types of two-state solutions" and, asked if a two-state solution was impossible with Netanyahu in office, Biden replied, "No, it's not."

US forces strike Houthi sites in Yemen as Biden says allied action hasn't yet stopped ship attacks

WASHINGTON (AP)—U.S. forces on Thursday conducted a fifth strike against Iranian-backed Houthi rebel military sites in Yemen as President Joe Biden acknowledged that the American and British bombardment had yet to stop the militants' attacks on vessels in the Red Sea that have disrupted global shipping.

The latest strikes destroyed two Houthi anti-ship missiles that "were aimed into the southern Red Sea and prepared to launch," U.S. Central Command said in a statement posted to X, formerly known as Twitter. They were conducted by Navy F/A-18 fighter aircraft, the Pentagon said.

Biden said the U.S. would continue the strikes, even though so far they have not stopped the Houthis from continuing to harass commercial and military vessels.

"When you say working, are they stopping the Houthis, no. Are they going to continue, yes," Biden said in an exchange with reporters before departing the White House for a domestic policy speech in North Carolina.

IN CELEBRATION OF HIS NEW LIFE

†Isidro Taisacan Cabrera

Known as "Isidro Kapuluk"

Born on May 10, 1950, was called by our Heavenly Father on January 12, 2024, at the age of 73.

In His New Life, He Now Joins His:
Parents: Ascension Taisacan Cabrera; Ricardo Salas Sablan
Reared Parents: Ramona Taisacan Cabrera Lizama; Isabel Torres & Roman Taisacan Cabrera
Parents In-Law: Tomas Palacios Sablan and Isabel Mendiola Cabrera Sablan
Son: James Patrick Sablan
Daughter: Isabel Ascension Sablan Cabrera
Grandson: "EJ" Eric Jino
Sister: Donna Cabrera Appleby
Brothers: David P. Sablan, David C. Sablan
He is additionally joins by: Numerous Uncles, Aunties, Brothers and Sisters In-Laws

His memories will forever live in the hearts of his:
Wife: Bernadita Cabrera Sablan-Cabrera

Children: Romaldo Peter/Regina Santos: Kevin, Cierra, Rachael & Ha'ane Isa; Lenny Kelvin/Thelma Sablan & Children: Jeffrey Thomas Sablan; Nanette/Aaron Cabrera: Kaipo, Kimo, Keith, Aaron Jr., & Isabel; +James Patrick Sablan: Jaci Nicole & Edjay Jaime (Meritza/Edna); Christopher/Jonathan Sablan; Isidro Jr./Esmeralda S. Cabrera: Isabel Camerin; Cameron/Mandy S. Cabrera: Candice, Maebel, Cadence & Mason Manuel; Rihanna Jordyn S. Cabrera

Reared Children: Antonio/Julie Ann Appleby Cruz & Children; George/Melissa Appleby-Mendiola & Children; Shawn Appleby & Children, Jerica Nikita Appleby & Children

Brothers, Sisters and In-Laws:+Vicenta/Joe P. Sablan & Children; Pat/Antonio P. Sablan & Children; Marina Borja & Children; Melanie/Bill Camacho & Children; Tina P./Erwin Flores & Children; Jessica Palacios & Children; Yvonne/Benigno C. Sablan & Children; Tina/Ricardo C. Sablan & Children; Catherine C. Sablan & Children; Karen/Glenn C. Sablan & Children; Rosanne C. Sablan

He will also be missed by numerous uncles, aunties, nieces, nephews, god children, in-laws and friends.

Daily mass of intentions is being offered at 6:00 pm, except on Sunday at 7:00 am immediately followed by rosary.

Funeral and Memorial Services will be held on Tuesday, January 23, 2024. His remains will be escorted from the Borja Funeral Home at 8:00 am to San Antonio Church for responso, final viewing and last respect. Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 11:00 am followed by interment service at Chalan Kanoa Cemetery where we will bid him farewell and a peaceful rest.

With heartfelt Si Yu'us Ma'ase and
Thank you for your kindness, thoughts, and prayers.
Bernie, Children, Grandchildren and Families.

Health & Wellness

YOUR HEALTH

The lifesaving benefits of childhood vaccinations

By TERI M. FLORES
CORRESPONDENT

Childhood vaccination has been one of the most effective public health strategies to control and prevent diseases, according to the National Institute of Health.

Throughout the decades, vaccination programs directly targeting children have resulted in preventing the spread of communicable and devastating diseases such as measles, hepatitis and rubella. Not only are childhood vaccinations crucial for preventing a range of illnesses, but most importantly they offer a plethora of long-term health benefits.

Editor's Note:
This article was originally intended for publication as part of a health supplement in celebration of National Immunization Awareness Month in August.

Host of diseases

Beyond being just needles and shots, childhood vaccinations prevent the spread of major diseases, one of which is measles—a highly contagious viral infection that is serious in young children. Measles can cause complications such as ear infection and diarrhea, with the more serious cases leading to pneumonia, encephalitis, and even death. Thanks to a highly effective vaccination program, the disease was eradicated in the United States in 2000.

Another debilitating disease that thankfully, has been eradicated on a global scale is polio—once a disabling and life-threatening disease that infects a person's spinal cord leading to paralysis, which is now preventable by the polio vaccine. Before 1950 when the polio vaccine became available, 5,000 people in the United States were affected yearly by the virus. Through a widespread polio vaccination program, no occurrence of the disease has happened in the United States since 1979.

Whooping cough or pertussis is another highly contagious respiratory tract infection that can cause serious disability and illness and even death for infants. Vaccination provides a protective cocoon, preventing this dangerous disease from spreading within communities.

Hepatitis B, which can cause chronic liver disease and liver cancer later in life, is also another life-threatening disease that can be prevented through childhood immunization. The vaccine for mumps and rubella is a crucial defense in preventing the occurrence of severe complications that include deafness and birth defects in pregnant women.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Beyond being just needles and shots, childhood vaccinations prevent the spread of major diseases.

Proper timing to be vaccinated

Childhood vaccinations are timed carefully. At birth, most babies are still developing their immune systems. Inasmuch as vaccines protect babies from diseases and complications stemming from illness, it also helps babies and children from spreading diseases.

It is important that babies get vaccinated at the right age. Based on guidelines set by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, most babies should receive the Hepatitis B vaccine within 24 hours after birth.

At 2 months old, babies are vaccinated against seven diseases——diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, Haemophilus influenza Type B, pneumonia, polio and rotavirus.

Between 12 and 18 months old, babies are given the MMR vaccine—for measles, mumps, and rubella as well as the chickenpox and Hepatitis A vaccines.

According to healthychildren.org, by the time a child is old enough to start school, their immune system will be equipped to resist 15 diseases!

Skipping vaccines for your children places them at risk since this leaves them without protection from spreading diseases to others. In case your child falls behind the suggested vaccine schedule, your child's health care provider will be able to provide a plan to catch up on their immunization.

Herd immunity

The significance of childhood vaccinations extends beyond immediate protection. Many childhood vaccinations provide immunity that can last well into adulthood, offering ongoing protection against diseases like measles, mumps, and rubella.

Carrying out successful childhood vaccination programs not only saves individual lives, but one of its long-term health benefit results in herd immunity. This is when a large portion of the population is vaccinated and creates a shield of immunity that helps protect those who cannot be vaccinated, such as individuals with weakened immune systems or severe allergies. This collective immunity is vital in safeguarding entire communities.

Healthy communities

A health community means that health care costs are reduced to a minimum. Preventing diseases through vaccination means fewer hospitalizations, doctor visits, and medical bills for families and healthcare systems.

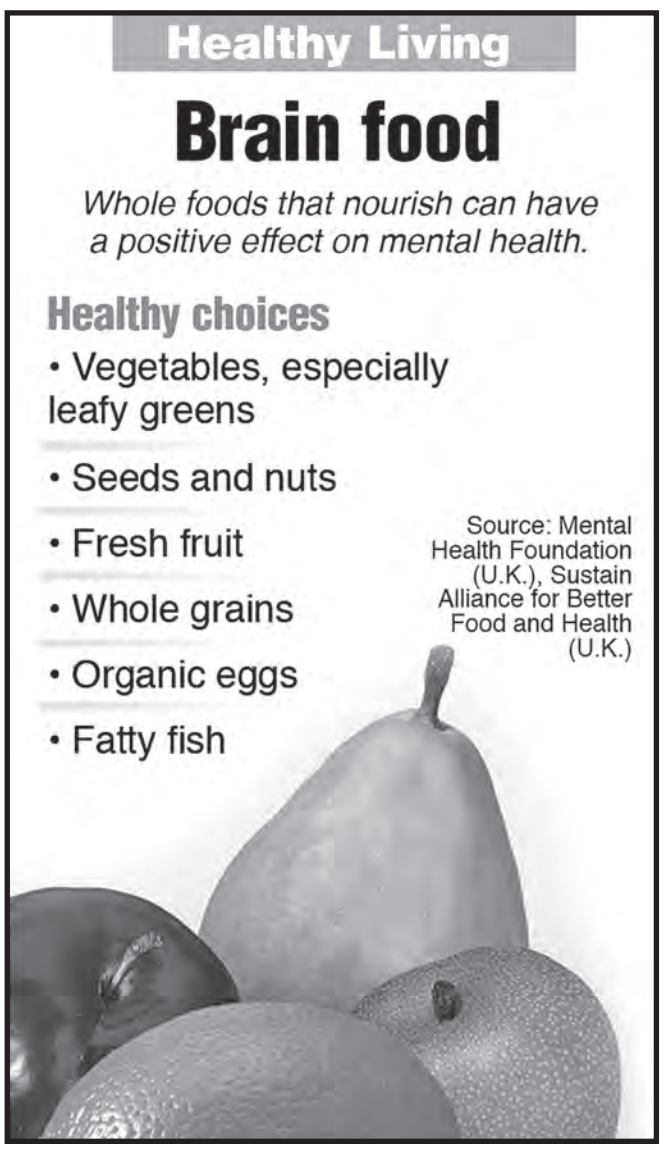
When the spread of debilitating diseases is curbed through vaccinations, children can grow up healthy, with the opportunity to enjoy active, fulfilling lives without the burden of chronic illnesses.

Diseases do not respect borders and preventing their spread benefits not only individuals, but also global populations. The vulnerability of people and communities to new, severe, or rapidly spreading risks to health is also minimized, if not prevented, through vaccination. The world saw this recently with the COVID-19 pandemic, when a global vaccination program was undertaken to immediately stop the death of countless men, women, and children.

Childhood vaccination is not just a testament to the power of prevention; it stands as one of the most profound and effective tools for ensuring a brighter, healthier future for our children. It is a gift that keeps on giving, not only in the immediate term but throughout their entire lives.

Parents can protect their children from life-threatening diseases that were once considered part of normal life. Families are spared the pain of watching loved ones suffer from preventable illnesses.

By ensuring our children receive the recommended vaccinations, we not only protect their immediate well-being but also invest in a healthier, safer future for generations to come.


Healthy Living
Brain food
Whole foods that nourish can have a positive effect on mental health.
Healthy choices
• Vegetables, especially leafy greens
• Seeds and nuts
• Fresh fruit
• Whole grains
• Organic eggs
• Fatty fish
Source: Mental Health Foundation (U.K.), Sustain Alliance for Better Food and Health (U.K.)

UTI: This common infection can be serious

By SUSAN BARBER LINDQUIST
Mayo Clinic News Network

A urinary tract infection is common, but it can be serious.

"Simple urinary tract infections can be managed by your primary care provider, but when they become complex leading to other issues or problems, you should seek the care of a specialist," says Dr. Mitchell Humphreys, a urologist at Mayo Clinic.

What is a UTI?

The urinary system helps the body eliminate waste, excess water and salt. It encompasses the kidneys, ureters, bladder and urethra. Bacteria can enter any part of the system, causing an infection.

What are UTI symptoms?

A UTI may cause symptoms but not always. Common symptoms are:

■ A strong urge to urinate. Even after using the toilet, that sensation "to go" may not go away.

■ A burning or discomfort sensation while passing urine.

■ Urinating often, passing small amounts of urine.

■ Blood in the urine. Blood in the urine may be red, but it may look pink or brown.

■ Cloudy-looking or strong-smelling urine.

■ Pelvic pain. Women, in particular, may feel pain and pressure around the pubic bone.

Symptoms also may depend on which part of the urinary tract is affected. If you're feeling back or side pain, that may be from a kidney infection. If pain is in the lower belly, a bladder infection may be the culprit.

Especially in older adults, one effect of a UTI can be delirium, or feeling increased confusion.

What are risk factors for a UTI?

"Typically, our immune systems are great at combating and preventing UTIs, but there are several situations and certain individuals that may be more prone to UTIs," Dr. Humphreys says.

■ Female anatomy: Women have greater risk of UTIs. Because a woman's urethra is shorter than a man's, bacteria can more easily enter the urinary system. Menopause also increases the risk of UTIs in women.

■ Sexual activity: UTIs are not sexually transmitted infections, but sexual activity increases the risk for UTIs. Intercourse can cause bacteria to enter the urethra.

■ Some birth control methods: Diaphragms and spermicide, for example, increase the risk for UTIs.

■ Catheter use: Catheters may be used by people in the hospital or by those who are paralyzed or have other neurological problems that make it difficult to urinate.

"A catheter is a foreign body and can serve as a highway to allow bacteria to have access to the bladder," Dr. Humphreys says.

■ Recent urinary procedure: Urinary surgery or an exam with medical instruments can increase UTI risk.

■ Other health concerns: People born with urinary tract problems or those who have kidney stones, prostate issues, or suppressed immune systems are at increased risk of UTIs.

With prompt treatment, UTIs rarely cause complications. But without proper treatment, UTIs can be serious. Complications may include permanent kidney damage or sepsis, which can be potentially life-threatening.

What are UTI treatments?

UTIs typically are treated with antibiotics. Be sure to take the medication as directed.

What helps prevent UTIs?

■ Drink plenty of liquids. Water consumption dilutes urine, leads to urinating more frequently and flushes bacteria.

■ Wipe from front back. After urinating or having a bowel movement, wipe from front to back to help prevent spread of bacteria.

■ Urinate soon after sex.

■ Avoid potentially irritating products. Using deodorant sprays or powders in the genital area may irritate the urethra.

■ Switch birth control. Consider birth control methods other than a diaphragm or spermicide, for example, which can contribute to bacterial growth.

Life & Style

Grand jury indicts Alec Baldwin in fatal shooting of movie cinematographer

SANTA FE, N.M. (AP)—A grand jury indicted Alec Baldwin on Friday on an involuntary manslaughter charge in a 2021 fatal shooting during a rehearsal on a movie set in New Mexico, reviving a dormant case against the actor.

Baldwin

Special prosecutors brought the case before a grand jury in Santa Fe this week, months after receiving a new analysis of the gun that was used. They declined to answer questions after spending about a day and a half presenting their case to the grand jury.

Defense attorneys for Baldwin indicated they'll fight the charge.

"We look forward to our day in court," said Luke Nikas and Alex Spiro, defense attorneys for Baldwin, in an email.

While the proceeding is shrouded in secrecy, two of the witnesses seen at the courthouse included crew members—one who was present when the fatal shot was fired and another who had walked off the set the day before due to safety concerns.

Baldwin, the lead actor and a co-producer on the Western movie "Rust," was pointing a gun at cinematographer Halyna Hutchins during a rehearsal on a movie set outside Santa Fe in October 2021 when the gun went off, killing her and wounding director Joel Souza.

Baldwin has said he pulled back the hammer, but not the trigger, and the gun fired.

The charge has again put Baldwin in legal trouble and created the possibility of prison time for an actor who has been a TV and movie mainstay for nearly 40 years, with roles in the early blockbuster "The Hunt for Red October," Martin Scorsese's "The Departed" and the sitcom "30 Rock."

The indictment provides prosecutors with two alternative standards for pursuing an involuntary manslaughter charge against Baldwin in the death of Hutchins. One would be based on negligent use of a firearm, and the other alleges felony misconduct "with the total disregard or indifference for the safety of others."

Judges recently agreed to put on hold several civil lawsuits seeking compensation from Baldwin and producers of "Rust" after prosecutors said they would present their case to a grand jury. Plaintiffs in those suits include members of the film crew.

Los Angeles-based attorney Gloria Allred, who is representing the slain cinematographer's parents and younger sister in a civil case, said Friday that her clients have been seeking the truth about what happened the day Hutchins was killed and will be looking forward to Baldwin's trial.

Neama Rahmani, a former federal prosecutor and president of the West Coast Trial Lawyers firm in Los Angeles, pointed to previous missteps by prosecutors, saying they will need to do more than present ballistics evidence to make a case that Baldwin had a broader responsibility and legal duty when it came to handling the gun on the set.

Special prosecutors dismissed an involuntary manslaughter charge against Baldwin in April, saying they were informed the gun might have been modified before the shooting and malfunctioned. They later pivoted and began weighing whether to refile a charge against Baldwin after receiving a new analysis of the gun.

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Taylor Swift leads 2024 iHeartRadio Music Award Noms, followed by Jelly Roll, 21 Savage and SZA

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Taylor Swift leads the 2024 iHeartRadio Music Awards nominations with nine, followed closely by Jelly Roll, SZA, and 21 Savage with eight. Behind them is Olivia Rodrigo, who received seven. The iHeartRadio Music Awards honor the most played artists of the year on their stations and app. Fans can vote in several categories including best lyrics, best music video, best fan army, social star award, favorite tour photographer, TikTok bop of the year, favorite tour style and two new fields: favorite on screen and favorite debut album. Social voting begins today at iHeartRadio.com/awards and will close on March 25 at 11:59 p.m. PDT for all categories.

'Oppenheimer' and 'Poor Things' lead the race for Britain's BAFTA film awards

LONDON (AP)—Atom-bomb epic "Oppenheimer" leads the race for the British Academy Film Awards, with nominations in 13 categories including best film—eight more than its box-office rival, "Barbie." Gothic fantasia "Poor Things" received 11 nominations on the list announced Thursday, while historical epic "Killers of the Flower Moon" and Holocaust drama " The Zone of Interest" had nine each. Other leading contenders include French courtroom drama "Anatomy of a Fall," boarding school comedy "The Holdovers" and Leonard Bernstein biopic "Maestro," with seven nominations each. Grief-flecked love story "All of Us Strangers" was nominated in six categories and class-war dramedy "Saltburn " in five. " Barbie," one half of 2023's "Barbenheimer" box office juggernaut, also got five nominations, but missed out on nods for best picture and best director.

6 alleged gang members convicted of killing Chicago rapper FBG Duck in 2020

CHICAGO (AP)—A federal jury has convicted six alleged gang members in the 2020 fatal shooting of Chicago rapper FBG Duck, a killing that prosecutors said was part of long-running violence over gang territories on the city's South Side. Jurors deliberated for about 16 hours over three days before announcing Wednesday that they had reached a verdict, convicting the six defendants of murder in the aid of racketeering and conspiracy to commit murder. FBG Duck, whose real name was Carlton Weekly, was shot 16 times outside the luxury clothing store Dolce & Gabbana in Chicago's upscale Gold Coast neighborhood on Aug. 4, 2020. The 26-year-old's girlfriend and another man were wounded in the attack. The jury convicted Charles Liggins, 32; Kenneth Roberson, 30; Christopher Thomas, 24; Marcus Smart, 25; Tacarlos Offerd, 32; and Ralph Turpin, 34, of murder in the aid of racketeering and conspiracy to commit murder. Liggins, Roberson, Thomas, Smart and Offerd were also convicted of using a firearm in Weekly's murder.

Adam Harrison, a son of 'Pawn Stars' celebrity Rick Harrison, has died in Las Vegas at age 39

LAS VEGAS (AP)—Adam Harrison, one of three sons of reality TV show "Pawn Stars" celebrity Richard "Rick" Harrison, has died in Las Vegas, a family representative said Saturday. He was 39. Harrison family spokesperson Laura Herlovich confirmed Adam Harrison died Friday, said his death was from a suspected drug overdose and issued a short statement. "Our family is extremely saddened by the death of Adam," the statement said. "We ask for privacy as we grieve his loss." The Las Vegas Review-Journal reported that police were investigating Adam Harrison's death, which was first reported by celebrity website TMZ. Las Vegas police did not immediately respond Saturday to messages from The Associated Press.

Arnold Schwarzenegger stopped by customs over luxury watch after arriving in Germany

BERLIN (AP)—Arnold Schwarzenegger was stopped for hours by customs at Munich Airport after entering Germany with a luxury watch that was potentially to be auctioned at a charity event.

Schwarzenegger

The former movie star and California governor was stopped for a routine check after arriving Wednesday, customs spokesperson Thomas Meister said. Schwarzenegger was able to leave after about 2½ hours, he said Thursday.

Goods over the value of 430 euros ($467) that will stay in the European Union have to be declared and, where appropriate, duty paid on them. German daily Bild, which first reported on the incident, reported that the allegedly undeclared watch made by Swiss manufacturer Audemars Piguet was valued at about 20,000 euros ($21,739) by Schwarzenegger, for whom it was specially produced.

The Schwarzenegger Climate Initiative said that Schwarzenegger was detained "for traveling with a watch he owns, that he might be auctioning at his charity auction (Thursday) in Kitzbuehel," in neighboring Austria.

It added in an emailed statement that Schwarzenegger "cooperated at every step even though it was an incompetent shakedown" and that he agreed to "prepay potential taxes on the watch (remember, it is his personal watch)."

Friend refuses to make the changes she needs

DEAR ABBY: I have a friend who complains over and over about the same issue. I've given her advice and even helped her with contacts to enable her to move so that she's out of her abusive relationship. She always responds, "Yes, I need to do something," but never does.

She continues to allow her part-time spouse to return to her home and resume his abusive, drunken behavior. I've reached the point where I can't continue to help or offer potential solutions because she won't do anything to improve her situation. She reaches out to me only to complain about her situation.

Our friendship is very much a one-sided thing. That she has never just called me to say hello and inquire how I'm doing is disheartening. What else can I do? I can lead her to water, but I can't make her drink it! I'm so sad that she doesn't see her own value and what she's deserving of.

IT'S INSANITY IN NEVADA

DEAR 'INSANITY': Wake up to the fact that this woman is using you to vent, nothing more. She's not interested in your advice. She doesn't recognize her own value because it was either eroded when she was growing up or by the drunk abuser she married. You could boost her ego to the top of Mount Everest but it wouldn't last because she has no core of self-respect.

You recognize this friendship is not reciprocal. Unless it brings you some sort of psychic gratification, ask yourself why you are spending so much time nurturing it. Compile a list of resources she can use if her situation becomes dangerous but, beyond that, waste no more time trying to "fix" her.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: My brother and I were very close while growing up. But when he got into drugs as a teen, he started doing things I could not support, so we drifted apart. I never wanted to believe that he would do me harm, but I have finally had to admit to myself that he's the one who stole my treasured, irreplaceable jewelry and sold it for drug money.

He has been in recovery for nearly 30 years and has apologized to everyone—except me. He may not remember, or may not want to remember, how deeply he hurt me. How do I continue to see him at family gatherings when I'm so disgusted with him that I won't speak to him? It's not a matter of taking him aside and telling him this; he would just attack. Should I just stop going to family gatherings?

SADDENED SISTER IN CANADA

DEAR SISTER: Your brother may have been in recovery for the last 30 years, but the behavior you describe is not that of a well man. Please do not cut yourself off from the family gatherings, and resist the urge to confront him, which you know won't bring you the satisfaction you want or end well. Keep your distance, occupy yourself with the relatives with whom you are close, be polite and ignore him as much as you can.

■ ■ ■

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable – and most frequently requested – poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

By Abigail Van Buren
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

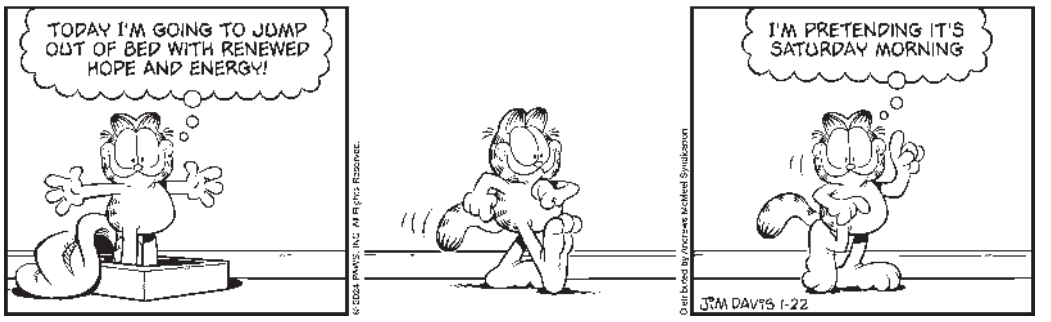
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

OUR LIVES ARE FILLED WITH MACHINES DESIGNED TO REDUCE WORK AND INCREASE LEISURE. WE HAVE MORE LEISURE THAN MAN HAS EVER HAD.
AND WHAT DO WE DO WITH THIS LEISURE? EDUCATE OURSELVES? TAKE UP NEW INTERESTS? EXPLORE? INVENT? CREATE?
DAD, I CAN'T HEAR THIS COMMERCIAL.
IF IT WERE UP TO DAD, LEISURE WOULD BE AS BAD AS WORK.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis



Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

MAN, I'VE BEEN HAVING SOME WEIRD DREAMS.
I HAD ONE LAST NIGHT WHERE GUMBO AND NICK WERE AT A CASINO.
THEY WERE TALKING. DRIVING A CAR.
IT WAS PRETTY COOL.
I GOT AIR TIME!
HARRELL

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

I PULLED YOU OVER FOR LITTERING.
I DIDN'T THROW ANYTHING OUT THE WINDOW.
NO, BUT YOU LEFT YOUR MUFFLER IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROAD A MILE BACK.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

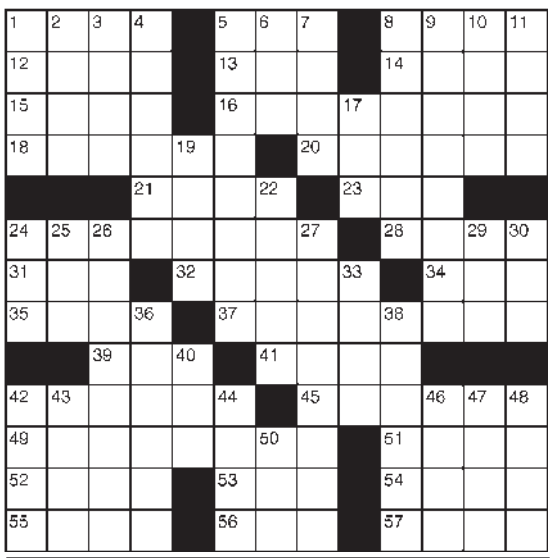
ACROSS
1 Chat
5 Derek and Diddley
8 Bygone ruler
12 Jai —
13 Contented sound
14 Cape —, Portugal
15 Audubon subject
16 Sculpture garden pieces
18 John of "Full House"
20 Vineyard harvest
21 Oodles
23 Neighbor of Ill.
24 Be noticeable
28 Fork prong
31 Possess
32 Strictly — nous
34 Fixed
35 Hourly pay
37 Pasta and potatoes, e.g.
39 Flamenco cheer
41 — many words
42 Judge's decision
45 Sports venues
49 Detached, in music
51 Hurry
52 Caesar's "I came"
53 "Kapow!"
54 Auction
55 Whispered "Hey!"
56 Venus, to Serena
57 Biblical kingdom

DOWN
1 Folder features
2 Landed
3 Yuri Zhivago's love
4 Nicole of "The Hours"
5 Reed instruments
6 Cereal grain
7 Carpet type
8 Class absentee
9 Bar keeper?
10 Estate measure
11 Light beams
17 Numerical prefix
19 Shoppe description
22 — -frutti
24 Plant seeds
25 Former Delta rival
26 Luanda inhabitants
27 Windows above doors
29 Born
30 Sci-fi beings
33 Formerly, once
36 Draw forth
38 Sandpaper type
40 SASE, e.g.
42 Answer an invite
43 Western tribe
44 Yaks
46 Two-way
47 Madonna's "La — Bonita"
48 Throat clearer
50 — chi

Solution time: 21 mins.

N	O	D		S	A	N	C		C	O	D	E
E	V	A		U	B	E	R		A	X	I	S
W	E	L	L	M	A	D	E		L	O	S	T
T	R	E	A	T	S		N	E	E			
			T	E	E		A	L	B	U	M	S
T	A	T	E	R		P	D	F		R	I	A
A	M	F	R		C	H	F		S	C	T	S
T	I	N		M	A	O		M	F	F	T	S
A	D	D	I	F	S		D	I	C			
			A	N	C		U	N	U	S	F	D
J	U	S	T		A	C	C	O	I	A	D	F
I	S	A	T		D	F	A	R		W	I	N
O	B	O	E		E	N	T	S		S	T	Y

Last Friday's Answer



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Beverley Mitchell, 43; Balthazar Getty, 49; Guy Fieri, 56; Diane Lane, 59.

Happy Birthday: It's up to you to administer the desired changes. Devise a to-do list to help you organize, and set a plan to reach your expectations. Taking the initiative to lower stress is the first step to better health and a happier lifestyle. Be open to suggestions from loved ones and experts. Address legal and contractual issues, and apply for permits before you begin. Your numbers are 5, 13, 22, 28, 30, 34, 41.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19)*: Consider your options and choose what serves you best. Traveling and learning are favored and will lead to connections that can make your life easier. Don't let anger creep into a controversial situation. Keep your thoughts to yourself, act quickly and finish what you start. ✪✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20)*: Handle money matters yourself. Don't count on someone to come through for you financially, emotionally or physically. The sooner you take on responsibilities, the easier it will be to get things done and reap the rewards. What you accomplish will lead to new prospects. ✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20)*: If you engage in emotional games, a situation will escalate. You must move forward alone to ensure you get the desired results. Partnerships will fall short of your expectations. Put yourself first and make decisions that lead to personal gain. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22)*: Make your dream come true. Stop imagining how things can be; take steps to initiate a plan that supports what you want. Be bold, speak up and don't back down when faced with opposition. A partnership will help you avoid going over budget. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22)*: Stay within budget. Refuse to let anyone talk you into something you don't need. Reach out to someone you can count on for support and excellent advice. Put your energy where it does the most good, and refuse to give in to anyone who puts pressure on you. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22)*: Participate and do your part. The contributions you make will lead to exciting connections and opportunities. Learn to go with the flow and to contribute what you can. Personal growth and physical improvements are favored. ✪✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22)*: Refuse to let your emotions take over. A disagreement won't go well if you aren't prepared to compromise. Play fair and set boundaries to avoid being put in a weak position. Alter your surroundings to suit your needs. Embrace love and avoid discord. ✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21)*: Pay attention to where your money goes. Use your intelligence or ask for an expert's help to organize a system that helps you live within your means. Know when to say no to people trying to shame you into donating to things you cannot afford. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21)*: Stop worrying about what others think or say. Be true to yourself, and focus on what brings the most satisfaction. Get involved in activities or events that offer positive personal change and the ability to network with individuals who can help you reach your goal. ✪✪✪

CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19)*: You can manipulate a conversation. Your wit, rapid response and sheer genius will keep you ahead of anyone trying to oppose your plans. A money issue will arise if you engage in a joint venture or buy into the hype surrounding a product or investment. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18)*: Set priorities and don't stop until you are satisfied with the results. Share your feelings and intentions to resolve matters quickly. Take a unique approach to work responsibilities, and you'll discover a quick and easy way to eliminate unfinished business. Update your appearance. ✪✪✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20)*: If your emotions get in the way of reason, a misunderstanding will spin out of control. Proceed with an open mind and confirm facts to avoid criticism. Discipline and hard work will impress someone who can help you advance. ✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are charming, admired and disciplined. You are forthright and imaginative.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	7	1	5	6			8	9
					2		6	4
	3			8	9	5	1	
7	5	2				8		1
3	6	9	1	2	8			
	8	4					2	6
			2		7	4	9	
			8					2
				9		1	7	8

Difficulty: ★ 1/22

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Last Friday's Answer

5	6	1	2	3	8	7	4	9
4	2	7	1	9	6	3	8	5
3	8	9	7	4	5	2	6	1
6	3	5	9	8	2	1	7	4
2	1	8	4	5	7	6	9	3
7	9	4	6	1	3	8	5	2
9	7	3	5	6	1	4	2	8
1	4	6	8	2	9	5	3	7
8	5	2	3	7	4	9	1	6

Difficulty: ★★★★ 1/19

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WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

VACUUM-PACKED Solution: 7 letters

P	O	R	T	A	B	L	E	T	A	N	I	R	A	M
A	I	F	S	K	N	I	R	H	S	I	F	N	A	I
N	E	L	Z	Z	O	N	U	T	S	R	E	C	R	C
T	G	M	L	E	V	A	R	T	U	K	H	R	O	R
R	H	A	E	O	E	E	H	I	C	I	Z	N	L	O
Y	A	C	U	D	W	G	T	I	N	E	Y	I	L	W
R	N	H	B	G	I	S	H	E	N	E	B	A	E	A
E	D	E	M	T	E	C	T	O	A	Ⓒ	E	T	X	V
T	H	E	A	A	N	A	I	S	Ⓐ	R	A	N	T	E
R	E	S	L	E	L	T	T	Ⓝ	E	R	N	I	E	E
O	L	E	G	O	A	T	Ⓢ	C	E	H	S	A	R	E
F	D	Y	C	D	A	M	E	A	T	S	T	M	N	F
M	X	O	I	E	V	R	E	S	E	R	P	O	A	F
O	H	X	H	E	R	B	S	D	I	U	Q	I	L	O
C	O	N	V	E	N	I	E	N	T	S	N	I	O	C

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Beans, Cans, Cereal, Cheese, Chicken, Chocolate, Clothes, Coffee, Coins, Comforter, Convenient, External, Fish, Fruit, Gauge, Handheld, Heat, Herbs, Lamb, Liquids, Machine, Maintain, Marinate, Meats, Medicines, Microwave, Nozzle, Nuts, Oxidation, Oxygen, Pantry, Pillows, Portable, Preserve, Roll, Sealed, Shrinks, Tight, Travel, Yeast

Last Friday's Answer: Steel Magnolia

To purchase **WONDERWORD** books, visit www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480. (In Canada, call 1-855-232-2367)

McCaffrey's 2nd TD rallies 49ers to playoff win over Love, Packers

SANTA CLARA, Calif. (AP)—Christian McCaffrey scored his second touchdown on a 6-yard run with 1:07 to play, and the San Francisco 49ers mounted their first second-half comeback of the season to beat the Green Bay Packers 24-21 in a divisional-round playoff game on Saturday night.

After spending all regular season as front-runners, the Niners (13-5) needed to come from behind for a change, and Brock Purdy and McCaffrey did just enough on the last drive to send San Francisco to its third straight NFC championship game. The Niners will host the winner of Sunday's game between Tampa Bay and Detroit next weekend for a spot in the Super Bowl.

Purdy went 6 for 7 for 47 yards on the decisive drive, converting a third down to Brandon Aiyuk and then a 17-yarder to Chris Conley.

McCaffrey finished it off with his run on third-and-short and the 49ers' defense held on from there, with Dre Greenlaw intercepting Jordan Love for the second time to seal San Francisco's fifth straight playoff win over Green Bay (10-9).

That last throw across his body was one of the few mistakes by Love, who had given the Packers the lead with two TD passes in the third quarter. But his first full season as the starter in place of Aaron Rodgers had a disappointing ending.

Love had put the Niners in the unusual spot of playing from behind. Green Bay converted a third-and-15 when Ambry Thomas was called for a 41-yard pass interference call against Bo Melton. Love and Melton then connected on the next play for a wide-open 19-yard touchdown aided by Tashaun Gipson slipping on the wet turf in coverage.

After McCaffrey put San Francisco back in the lead with a 39-yard TD run, Green Bay struck quickly thanks to a 73-yard kick return by All-Pro Keisean Nixon that he fumbled, only to have teammate Eric Wilson recover.

Four plays later, Love threw a 2-yard touchdown pass to Tyler Kraft and the Packers extended the lead to 21-14 on a 2-point conversion pass to Aaron Jones.

The Niners were the first team to make the playoffs in 13 seasons without overcoming a second-half deficit to win a game.

They got a 52-yard field goal from Jake Moody on the first play of the fourth quarter to make it a four-point game and it stayed there when rookie Anders Carlson missed a 41-yarder for Green Bay.

AP

San Francisco 49ers running back Christian McCaffrey (23) scores a rushing touchdown during the second half of an NFL football NFC divisional playoff game against the Green Bay Packers Saturday, Jan. 20, 2024, in Santa Clara, Calif.

The Packers moved the ball easily in the first half, getting into the red zone on three straight drives to open the game. But they couldn't finishing any of them off, setting for two field goals and getting stopped on a fourth-and-1 sneak. They became the first team in 20 years to reach the red zone on their first three drives of a playoff game without getting a TD.

The Niners made them pay for that with Purdy hitting George Kittle on a 32-yard pass on the run for a TD that gave San Francisco the lead.

But San Francisco squandered another chance late in the half when coach Kyle Shanahan wasted time before settling for a 48-yard field goal attempt by Moody that was blocked by Colby Wooden to send the Niners into the half with a 7-6 lead.

Packers' Zach Tom left in the third quarter to get checked for a head injury and didn't return.

49ers' Deebo Samuel injured his shoulder on the opening drive and missed most of the game.

RAVENS 34, TEXANS 10

BALTIMORE (AP)—Lamar Jackson had already done plenty of running by the time he reached the end zone in the fourth quarter.

Apparently, he still had quite a bit of energy, leaping past the photographers and disappearing into the tunnel in a celebration that seemed cathartic for the All-Pro quarterback.

Jackson threw two touchdown passes and ran for two scores, and the Baltimore Ravens pulled away in the second half for a 34-10 win over the Houston Texans on Saturday to advance to the AFC championship game. It was only the second victory in five playoff games for Jackson, a fact he was well aware of.

"You know I heard that," he said. "I don't even got to hear it. I see it. But it is what it is. I really don't care about what people say. ... Those guys just had our team's number in the past, but it's a different team."

Jackson made some more history Saturday, becoming the first quarterback since at least 1948—in the regular season or playoffs—with at least two touchdown passes, two TD runs, 100 yards rushing and a 100 passer rating in the same game.

"Credit to Lamar," Texans coach DeMeco Ryans said. "He made a ton of great plays. That's why he's the MVP."

The Ravens (14-4) dominated the second half after the teams finished the second quarter tied at 10. Jackson said he did most of the talking at halftime.

"A lot of cursing," he said.

Jackson's 15-yard scoring run put Baltimore ahead to stay. Although C.J. Stroud had a solid, composed first half for Houston, the Texans (11-8) ultimately couldn't turn enough promising drives into points against an impressive Ravens defense.

Now Baltimore will host the AFC title game for the first time since January 1971, when the Colts beat the Oakland Raiders on their way to a Super Bowl championship. The Ravens will play in that semifinal round for the fifth time since their arrival in Baltimore. They'll take on the winner of Sunday's matchup between Buffalo and Kansas City.

"Our fans are going to get a chance to cheer just as loud or louder than they did in this game, and they were amazing," Ravens coach John Harbaugh said. "I thought our fans were incredible. Man, it was deafening out there."

Harbaugh's brother Jim was on hand for the game, returning the favor after John went to watch Jim coach Michigan to college football's national title earlier this month.

Ravens fans have been haunted by what happened in the playoffs four years ago, when Baltimore went 14-2 in the regular season but dropped its postseason opener to Tennessee. Houston did enough to create some anxiety, especially when Steven Sims returned a punt for a touchdown and Jackson struggled at times with the blitzing Texans defense.

But on the first possession of the second half, Jackson guided Baltimore 55 yards in six plays and scored on a run up the middle. Then, a 15-yard touchdown pass to Isaiah Likely early in the fourth made it 24-10.

Jackson's final touchdown came on an 8-yard run with 6:20 to play, and the fired up quarterback kept running right into the tunnel in that corner of the field.

Sims' return was the only TD for the Texans, whose offense never did reach the end zone in 120 minutes against the Ravens this season. Houston lost 25-9 in its season opener at Baltimore.

Jackson rushed for 821 yards during the regular season, which is a big part of the case for his second MVP award. But he surpassed 100 yards on the ground only once. He ran for exactly 100 on Saturday on 11 attempts. A 14-yard bootleg on fourth-and-1 near midfield led to the touchdown by Likely that gave the Ravens some breathing room.

Jackson also passed for 152 yards.

"Lamar is a dog. I've been a fan of his since high school," Stroud said. "It's really an honor to share the field with a player like that."

Stroud threw for 175 yards and didn't take a sack against a tough Baltimore defensive front, but the Texans dropped to 0-5 in the divisional round of the playoffs. They're the only current franchise that hasn't reached a conference championship game.

The Ravens led the NFL in sacks this season, but it was Jackson who was under pressure in the first half, when Houston got to him three times. Two of those sacks came back-to-back in the final minute of the second quarter after a missed field goal gave Baltimore decent field position.

Penalties held the Texans back all day—they ended up with 11 for 70 yards. After Justin Tucker opened the scoring for Baltimore with a 53-yard field goal, Houston appeared headed for points of its own before two false starts and an intentional grounding flag pushed the Texans out of range.

Houston did eventually tie it on a 50-yard field goal by Ka'imi Fairbairn, but the Ravens answered with a 76-yard march capped by Jackson's 3-yard touchdown pass to Nelson Agholor.

Down 10-3, the Texans struck back on special teams. Sims, who was signed from the practice squad to the active roster earlier in the week, broke free up the middle for a 67-yard touchdown.

According to the NFL's Next Gen Stats, Jackson faced a career-high blitz rate of 75% and went 13 of 18 for 120 yards and two touchdowns against the blitz. He got rid of the ball in an average of 2.25 seconds in the second half, compared to 3.51 in the first.

The Ravens outrushed Houston 229-38, and eventually the Texans' lack of any real ground attack caught up with them—even though they avoided any sacks and turnovers on the day.

NFL will keep the scouting combine in Indianapolis in 2025

NEW YORK (AP)—The NFL scouting combine will remain in Indianapolis through 2025.

"Indianapolis has a storied history with the NFL combine, so we are thrilled to continue partnering with Visit Indy, the Indianapolis Colts, and our local partners for the event in 2025," league executive Peter O'Reilly said Thursday.

"The city has continued to innovate and help us evolve both the setup for the football evaluation process as well as growing the in-person experience for football fans in the region and across the country."

Indianapolis has hosted the combine since 1987, but the league has given other cities the opportunity to campaign to host it in the future.

Thunder beat T'wolves, pull closer to Western Conference leaders

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 11 of his 33 points in the fourth quarter and the Oklahoma City Thunder rallied to beat the Minnesota Timberwolves 102-97 on Saturday night in a matchup of the top teams in the Western Conference standings.

Jaylin Williams added 20 points for Oklahoma City, and Minnesota native Chet Holmgren had 15. The Thunder trailed by 11 early in the fourth before rallying to win for the second time in four games to pull within a game of Minnesota.

Anthony Edwards and Karl-Anthony Towns each had 19 points for Minnesota and Naz Reid added 18. The Timberwolves had won four in a row to regain the West's No. 1 spot after losing four of six to drop behind Oklahoma City.

AP

Minnesota Timberwolves guard Anthony Edwards (5) celebrates next to Oklahoma City Thunder guard Shai Gilgeous-Alexander (2) after making a basket and being fouled during the first half of an NBA basketball game Saturday, Jan. 20, 2024, in Minneapolis.

KNICKS 126, RAPTORS 100

NEW YORK (AP)—Julius Randle had 18 points, 16 rebounds and 10 assists in his 14th career triple-double, and New York routed Toronto in the first meeting between the teams since a trade last month.

RJ Barrett and Immanuel Quickley return to loud cheers at Madison Square Garden, but the Knicks improved to 9-2 since OG Anunoby joined their lineup after the Dec. 30 deal that has helped both teams.

Jalen Brunson led all scorers with 38 points on 13-for-23 shooting from the field and hit each of his seven free throws. Randle had his eighth triple-double with the Knicks.

Barrett scored 20 points and Quickley had 12 points and 11 assists.

76ERS 97, HORNETS 89

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP)—Joel Embiid had 33 points to extend his franchise-record run of 30 or more to 20 games and Philadelphia beat Charlotte for its fifth straight victory.

The reigning NBA MVP Embiid also had 10 rebounds. He was 11 of 23 from the field and made 11 of 12 free throws.

Tobias Harris added 21 points and Tyrese Maxey had 16 points and eight assists to help Philadelphia improve to 28-13. The 76ers - coming off a victory Friday night at Orlando - trailed by four entering the fourth quarter, then held the Hornets to 16 points in the final period.

Miles Bridges had 25 points and 11 rebounds for Charlotte. No. 2 overall pick Brandon Miller added 23. The Hornets are 9-31.

SPURS 131, WIZARDS 127

WASHINGTON (AP)—Victor Wembanyama returned after sitting out a game to score 24 points and grab eight rebounds, leading San Antonio over Washington.

Tre Jones added 11 points, 12 assists, and eight rebounds for the Spurs, while Jeremy Sochan scored 23 points and Devin Vasell had 21.

Wembanyama sat out for the sixth time this season against Charlotte on Friday night. The No. 1 overall pick sprained an ankle on Dec. 23 at Dallas, and the Spurs have been cautious with him. The reason for his absence was listed as "rest" on the injury report. Spurs coach Gregg Popovich said it was "doctor's orders."

CAVALIERS 116, HAWKS 95

ATLANTA (AP)—Donovan Mitchell had 18 points and eight assists to lead a balanced attack as Cleveland extended the NBA's longest current win streak to seven games with a victory over Atlanta.

Jarrett Allen had 14 points and 11 rebounds, while seven Cavaliers scored in double figures. Sam Merrill had 18 points with five 3-pointers. Dean Wade scored 17 and Georges Niang had 14.

The Cavs scored the first 10 points of the game and never trailed in holding the Hawks to a season-low in points and beating Atlanta for the third time in three games this season.

Dejounte Murray, who hit last-second, game-winning shots for the Hawks in their previous two games, led Atlanta with 24 points. He also had nine rebounds and five assists. Jalen Johnson added 20 points and seven rebounds.

BULLS 125, GRIZZLIES 96

CHICAGO (AP)—Ayo Dosunmu scored 20 points, DeMar DeRozan added 18 and Chicago pounded Memphis.

After falling behind, the Bulls had a 17-0 third-quarter run to pull away to their sixth win in eight games, even though Zach LaVine sat out because of a sprained right ankle.

Coby White added 17 points for Chicago. Patrick Williams added 15 and Andre Drummond chipped in with 15 points and 10 rebounds.

Jaren Jackson Jr. led Memphis with 26 points after scoring 36 points Thursday night in a loss at Minnesota. Luke Kennard and Vince Williams Jr. each had 14 points.

ROCKETS 127, JAZZ 126

HOUSTON (AP)—Alperen Sengun scored a career-high 37 points and had a game-high 14 rebounds to lead the Houston Rockets to a 127-126 overtime win over the Utah Jazz on Saturday night.

Sengun missed two free throws with 8.1 seconds remaining in overtime, and Utah's Jordan Clarkson missed a mid-range jumper in the closing seconds as Houston hung on to snap a three-game losing streak.

Jabari Smith Jr. hit a free throw with 36.4 seconds remaining in overtime to put Houston up 127-126. On the next play, Amen Thompson had a high-flying block at the rim to deny Collin Sexton's layup attempt that could have given Utah the lead.

The Rockets returned home where they are 16-6 after falling to 4-15 on the road where they lost five of six on an East Coast trip.

Utah has now lost back-to-back games following a six-game winning streak.

Clarkson led Utah with 33 points off the bench, while Collin Sexton added 28. Walker Kessler had five blocks and Ochai Agbaji added three blocks.

Sengun hit two free throws with 20 seconds remaining in the fourth to tie the game at 115. Sexton missed a 3 at the buzzer to send the game to overtime.

BUCKS 141, PISTONS 135

DETROIT (AP)—Damian Lillard had 45 points and 11 assists to lead the Milwaukee Bucks to a 141-135 victory over the Detroit Pistons on Saturday.

"Dame was so great tonight, and he was competing on both sides of the ball," Bucks coach Adrian Griffin said. "I had no idea he had 45, but he's a rhythm player and he definitely got into a rhythm out there. He made big shots, and that's why he's on this team."

Lillard was the first player in Bucks history with at least 40 points, 10 assists and five 3-pointers in a game.

"I had a good warmup and I got a couple shots to go in, so I felt good," he said. "I knew it was an important game, so I picked my spots. I moved the ball when I needed to move the ball and I attacked when I needed to attack."

Giannis Antetokounmpo added 31 points, 10 rebounds and nine assists, but missed 11 of his 22 free throw attempts. Brook Lopez had 19 points for the Bucks, who have won four of five.

"Giannis was big on both ends," Griffin said. "He got us some stops at the start of the second half and he was aggressive with the ball and getting to the rim. When he draws fouls, he gets us to the bonus faster than a lot of teams, and that's invaluable."

Alec Burks (33) and Ausur Thompson (career-high 22) combined for 55 points for Detroit's second unit, but Bojan Bogdanovic (19) and Jaden Ivey (18) were the only starters to reach double figures in the opener of a two-game series.

Warriors assistant coach Milojevic dies in Salt Lake City after heart attack

Golden State Warriors assistant coach Dejan Milojević, a mentor to two-time NBA MVP Nikola Jokic and a former star player in his native Serbia, died Wednesday in Utah after suffering a heart attack, the team announced. Milojević, part of the staff that helped the Warriors win the 2022 NBA championship, was 46.

Milojević died in Salt Lake City, where he was hospitalized Tuesday night after the medical emergency happened during a private team dinner. The Warriors had been scheduled to play the Utah Jazz on Wednesday night, a game the NBA postponed.

"We are absolutely devastated by Dejan's sudden passing," coach Steve Kerr said in a statement released by the team. "This is a shocking and tragic blow for everyone associated with the Warriors and an incredibly difficult time for his family, friends, and all of us who had the incredible pleasure to work with him."

Milojević's death elicited a massive and immediate outpouring of sympathy from the basketball community, and moments of silence were held Wednesday before NBA games. Miami Heat coach Erik Spoelstra called the news "horrific." Atlanta forward Bogdan Bogdanovic — a Serbian, like Milojević — politely declined comment Wednesday before the Hawks' game, saying "I'm sorry. I can't talk about it right now. I feel so bad," while tapping his chest. San Antonio coach Gregg Popovich raved about how good a coach Milojević was.

"You changed my life in such a short time," Warriors rookie Brandin Podziemski wrote on social media. "The most important thing you ever told me was to just smile! Your joy and laughs will forever be missed. Shine down on us from heaven."

Milojević was in his third season with the Warriors. He previously coached in Serbia—where he once worked with a young Jokic before the now-Denver Nuggets star came to the United States—along with Montenegro, plus had been an assistant coach for the Serbian national team alongside current Atlanta assistant Igor Koskoskov.

"The NBA mourns the sudden passing of Golden State assistant coach Dejan Milojević, a beloved colleague and dear friend to so many in the global basketball community," NBA Commissioner Adam Silver said.

Milojević worked closely with Jokic, Los Angeles Clippers center Ivica Zubac, Orlando center Goga Bitadze and Houston center Boban Marjanovic, among others, during his time as a coach in Europe. With the Warriors, he worked primarily with the big men like Kevon Looney, who raved about Milojević's attention to detail.

"Rest in peace, Deki," Dallas Mavericks star Luka Doncic wrote on social media.

Kerr said he originally learned of Milojević from Kent Lacob, the son of Golden State owner Joe Lacob. And when the Warriors went through some staffing changes in 2021, Kerr decided to pursue Milojević. It took some convincing, but Milojević finally agreed to take the offer. Kerr was thrilled.

"I immediately saw what Kent was talking about," Kerr said in a video produced by the Warriors last year. "He was so great to be around. At the same time, he had this amazing basketball background both as a player and a coach. It made so much sense for us to bring Deki in."

Milojević won three consecutive MVP awards in the Adriatic League, taking those trophies in 2004, 2005 and 2006 when the 6-foot-7, 240-pound power forward was at the peak of his playing career. Jokic was MVP of that league in 2015, a year after current Golden State forward Dario Saric was MVP.

His potential in the game came early: Shortly after he began playing, Milojević scored 141 points in a game as a 14-year-old in 1991.

"I teach all my players that basketball is not a job, but that they should enjoy the game," Milojević told Bosnian radio-television outlet RTV in a 2018 interview. "Because if you want to do something for the next 20 years, then you have to love it a lot. It's not easy to endure all these efforts if you don't like something. Only those who have a sincere love for the game can handle everything with great success."

Before joining the Warriors, Milojević had NBA experience through Summer League assistant coach stints with Atlanta, San Antonio and Houston. ***(AP)***

Djokovic reaches quarterfinals, matching Federer's Grand Slam record

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP)—Novak Djokovic was ruthless in a 6-0, 6-0, 6-3 win over Adrian Mannarino on Sunday, reaching the Australian Open quarterfinals and matching Roger Federer's all-time Grand Slam record.

In a rare daytime appearance on Rod Laver Arena, the 10-time Australian Open champion hit 31 winners and raced to victory in 1 hour and 44 minutes to progress to the last eight for the 58th time at a major, equaling Federer's record.

Djokovic is into the Australian Open quarterfinals for the 14th time, which is equal second on the all-time list with Rafael Nadal and John Newcombe. The difference is that he's converted most of those quarterfinal runs into titles at Melbourne Park.

"The first two sets were some of the best sets I've played in a while," said Djokovic, who is bidding for a record-extending 25th Grand Slam singles title. "I played great from the first to the last point."

He added, in jest: "I really wanted to lose that game in the third set because the tension was building in the stadium.

The 35-year-old Mannarino had gone to five sets in all three of his previous rounds. After missing a break point in the opening game, he almost never threatened Djokovic.

The Frenchman avoided a so-called triple-bagel – only five Grand Slam matches in the Open era have been won 6-0, 6-0, 6-0—but he was only postponing the inevitable.

AP

Novak Djokovic of Serbia reacts during his fourth round match against Adrian Mannarino of France at the Australian Open tennis championships at Melbourne Park, Melbourne, Australia, Sunday, Jan. 21, 2024.

Djokovic has admitted to feeling unwell in recent rounds but said his health is improveing.

"Last couple of days has been really good," he said. "It's going in a positive direction, healthwise, tennis-wise."

Djokovic plays either No. 7 Stefanos Tsitsipas, the runner-up here last year, or 12th-ranked Taylor Fritz.

Defending champion Aryna Sabalenka and U.S. Open winner Coco Gauff cruised into the women's quarterfinals with commanding wins.

No. 2-ranked Sabalenka, who won her first Slam title here last year, beat Amanada Anisimova 6-3, 6-2. Gauff, who picked up her first major at the U.S. Open in September, beat Magdalena Frech 6-1, 6-2.

Anisimova had won four of their previous five meetings but she didn't have the answers this time to counter the power of the Belarusian, who hit 18 winners.

"I'm super-happy with the level, happy to get this win, she's a tough opponent," Sabalenka said. "I love the atmosphere here, I love playing in front of you guys. I really want to stay as long as possible and hopefully we can get this thing one more time."

A brief rain delay at 4-1 in the first set stopped Sabalenka's momentum but she quickly recovered and pulled away in the second set. She'll meet either 16-year-old Mirra Andreeva or No. 9 Barbora Krejcikova in the last eight.

Gauff was the first woman through, needing just 63 minutes to see off Frech in a match played on Rod Laver Arena—in front of the Australian great.

"Luckily when I saw him come in I was already well up," Gauff said. "I heard clapping and knew it wasn't for us, it was only the first set. But thank you for coming, it's an honor."

Gauff will play Marta Kostyuk after the Ukrainian beat Maria Tomafeeva 6-2, 6-1 to reach the major quarterfinals for the first time.

Still a teenager, Gauff drew attention to her shoes, which carry a number of messages, including one that says: 'you can change the world with your racket,' something her father told her as a little girl.

Swiatek exits in a 3rd-round loss to Czech teenager Linda Noskova

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP)—Already down a set and facing a break point against Iga Swiatek, No. 50-ranked Linda Noskova decided she had nothing to lose.

She won 11 of the next 12 points to take the second set and swing momentum in their third-round match Saturday, ultimately becoming the first teenager to beat a No. 1-ranked woman at the Australian Open since 1999.

With a big serve and equally big groundstrokes, she unsettled Swiatek and held her cool, even under pressure in the last game to serve it out, for a 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 victory that means there's no top 10 players in the top half of the draw.

"I'm just really kind of exhausted mentally and physically," Noskova said in her post-match news conference following the upset. "I just believed my game tonight. I just really wanted this."

Swiatek is a four-time major winner but has never been past the semifinals at Melbourne Park. Even so, she was on an 18-match winning streak and expected to account for the 19-year-old Noskova, who is making her main draw debut at the tournament.

Swiatek beat 2020 Australian Open champion Sofia Kenin in the first round and had to rally from 4-1 down in the third to overcome 2022 finalist Danielle Collins in the second.

But after taking the first set against her Czech opponent, she struggled for rhythm. The decisive break was in the seventh game of the third set, with two forehand errors costing Swiatek the game.

JAPANESE

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he's been to Saipan eight times already and plans on coming back as he said he likes it here. Ohta and Hayashi, through Taniguchi said, "the weather conditions here are good for them before they play in their league in February."

The two baseball players returned to Japan last Sunday with hopes to return in the future for more training.

Jason Reyes, a 19-year-old pitcher from 2023 Tan Holdings-SBL major league season team Survivors, happened upon the clinic by chance as he was passing by.

He said of the clinic, "It's a good thing that they came out, not only for them, but for us too to learn a little bit of their skills—especially the younger baseball players… the kids look like they're having fun."

From what he learned from the clinic as a pitcher, Reyes said, "It's a good thing to learn more about fielding and batting because I needed a little bit of technique to be better."

At the end of the clinic, the participants were treated to autographs and pictures with Ohta and Hayashi.

In the past, other professional players have made their way to the CNMI to train and set up clinics, which not only promotes sports tourism, but also helps local players gain technical skills and knowledge from them.

The clinic was organized by the Saipan Baseball League in coordination with the Northern Marianas Sports Association.

LEIGH GASES

Seventeen youth sluggers pose for a group photo with 16-year veteran outfielder Taishi Ohta, back seventh from right, and rookie shortstop Takuma Hayashi, back seventh left, from Japan's Nippon Professional Baseball team Yokohama DeNA Baystars at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Baseball Field last Saturday.

LEIGH GASES

CNMI U18 national baseball team pitcher Benjamin Palacios swings as 16-year veteran outfileder Taishi Ohta from Japan's Nippon Professional Baseball team Yokohama DeNA Baystars watches during the one-day clinic at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Baseball Field last Saturday.

SHOTS

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game-leading shot, 20-19, with 50 seconds left.

It was over as Navarro shot another Hail Mary to win, 21-19, after more missed opportunities by Team Nesian Built gave the advantage to the win-hungry U16 team.

Fifteen-year-old Navarro said after the game that they joined this purely for experience, as they are too young to represent NMI for the FIBA Asia 3x3 Cup in Singapore this year.

The Saipan Southern High School student, after they beat the defending champs, said "it was very surprising. I know that there's a lot of competition and we just want to experience it and see what happens."

The strategy, Navarro said, was to just "shoot and shoot. Whenever we get the ball, just shoot and let it fly." Coming from behind with a more than 5-point deficit at one point, Navarro said, "We had a negative mindset but then as we played, we picked it up and we got the victory."

Even if they aren't eligible for the FIBA Asia Cup, Navarro said their team will be back again to play in the next tournament.

The last two 3x3 series in November and December were won by Team Nesian Built.

Team Nesian Built still has a chance of representing NMI in the FIBA Asia 3x3 Cup in Singapore.

Currently, TNB is in the lead in the points system with 140 points; second is Net Rippers at 90; third is Hagu Real Hoops with 80; Shots Fired is at 60; La Mesa Kusina (Eats Easy) has 50; K2 Ballers, Tupu Kingz, and Team Elite are at 30 each; Toka and Team Priority Care have 20 points each; and Socho, Brawlers, 10-7, Scorgasm, Tuntunizers, and Risers are at 10 points each.

Results of the women's 3x3 finals will be posted in the next issues of *Saipan Tribune*.

SERIN

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in the U16 finals, with the title going to Lee, 6-1, 4-6, 10-6.

In the U12 boys finals that was rescheduled from last Jan. 15, No. 1 seed Cody Park defeated Minjoon Jeon, 6-7, 6-4, 10-8.

For more information on the 2024 SIS Student Council Tennis Tournament, call (670) 788-7400 or (670) 989-0080.

The Northern Mariana Islands Tennis Association coordinated the tourney.

Results of the men's open division and mixed doubles will be posted in the next issues of *Saipan Tribune*.

McCaffrey's 2nd TD rallies 49ers to playoff win over Love, Packers.

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Sports

Djokovic reaches quarterfinals, matching Federer's Grand Slam record.

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Serin claims U18 girls title

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Serin Chung claimed the U18 girls title in the 2024 SIS Student Council Tennis Tournament that was held from last Friday to Sunday at the American Memorial Park tennis courts.

It was originally scheduled for last Monday, but due to inclement weather, it was pushed to last Sunday, and thankfully the weather held up long enough to finish the finals.

Chung defeated Hannah Chae, 6-0, 6-1, as the strong winds swirled around them. Chung was clearly more skilled, pushing Chae back with her much harder returns.

Chae was also her worst enemy as she made a few mistakes in her serves that resulted in faults, and couldn't quite put the command on her returns as accurately as Chung did.

The 17-year-old Chung went undefeated in the round-robin format as there were only three competitors in the division. Chae and Savita Sikkel went up first last Jan. 13, with Chae blanking Sikkel, 6-0, 6-0. Chung then discarded Sikkel, 6-2, 6-0, last Jan. 14 to meet up with Chae in the finals.

Chung, a senior at Saipan International School and organizer of the tourney, said that in her finals match that she was "feeling a bit nervous, so I just kept on telling myself to relax and have fun. I always play my best when I'm having fun."

Along with playing in the tourney, Chung also coordinated the event and said, "I always have a lot of fun playing in the SIS tournament. Although there are challenging aspects of running a tournament, it's always rewarding to see other people out there having fun."

In other results, Scarlett Loken won the title in the U12 division, in a round-robin format with two other players.

Loken defeated Olivia Zhang, 6-2, 6-2, then wrapped up the tourney with a win against Aileen Kim, 6-1, 6-0.

No. 1 seed Lina Tsukagoshi won the U14 girls title after she bested No. 2 seed Amy Park, 6-2, 6-2.

Rivals Hoo Wang and Anne Lee went at it for an exciting three-set match

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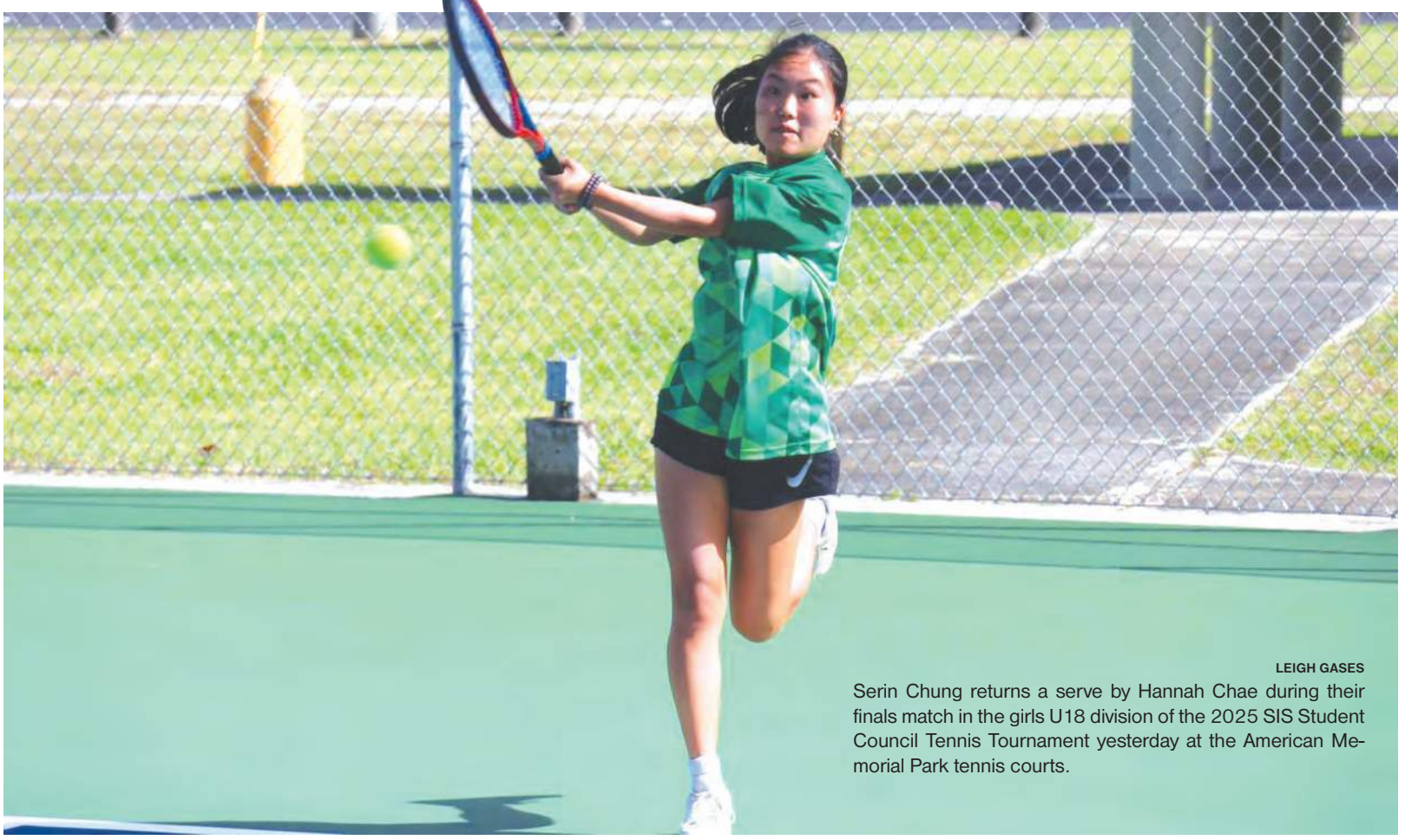

LEIGH GASES

Serin Chung returns a serve by Hannah Chae during their finals match in the girls U18 division of the 2025 SIS Student Council Tennis Tournament yesterday at the American Memorial Park tennis courts.

Japanese pro baseball players host 1-day clinic

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

It wasn't Shohei Ohtani, but CNMI sluggers were starstruck anyhow as two Japanese professional baseball players from Japan's Nippon Professional Baseball team Yokohama DeNA Baystars, graced the youth at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Baseball Field last Saturday.

Sixteen-year veteran outfielder Taishi Ohta and rookie shortstop Takuma Hayashi, along with translator/coordinator Eini Taniguchi, held a one-day baseball clinic for 17 young ball players and taught basic defensive and offensive skills for over an hour.

The clinic's participants ranged from the youngest at 10 years old to young adults.

Hayashi taught defense from the shortstop position—on how to set up, receive, and throw the ball properly to first base, with the help of Ohta and Taniguchi. In the batter's box, Ohta tweaked up and refined each player's stance and swing, with pitches from Hayashi.

Ohta and Hayashi came to Saipan last Jan. 11 to get two weeks' worth of training done in the tropic's warm weather and to get away from Japan's winter season before the start of their league.

Thirty-three-year-old Ohta said

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LEIGH GASES

Rookie shortstop Takuma Hayashi, left, and 16-year veteran outfielder Taishi Ohta from Japan's Nippon Professional Baseball team Yokohama DeNA Baystars graced the youth at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Baseball Field last Saturday with a one-day baseball clinic.

Shots Fired upsets Team Nesian Built in 3x3 tourney

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Team Shots Fired released shot after shot to make a comeback and stun two-time defending 3x3 champions Team Nesian Built to win the NMIBF Marianas Arsenal 3x3 Basketball Series for January.

Youth trumped experience this time around as the U16 team of young up-and-coming ballers—Jezpher Navarro, Christian Lucero, and Austin Diaz—pulled an upset against veteran Team Nesian Built's Coby Santos, Douglas Schmidt, Preston Basa, and Jack Lizama, 21-19, at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium last Saturday.

Team Nesian Built had the upper hand with a more than 5-point lead five minutes into the game, but the tenacity of Shots Fired allowed them to chip away at that lead come crunch time.

Back-to-back shots by Lucero allowed them to tie the game up, 17-17, with a little over a minute left.

Team Nesian Built tried to add to their lead and managed to put just 2 more points, 19-17, while Shots Fired continued to hack away at the net.

A missed shot by Lucero was tipped in by a waiting Diaz to get by 1 point of Team Nesian Built, 19-18. It was still Shots Fired possession after a missed attempt by Basa and they didn't waste it as Navarro sunk the

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LEIGH GASES

From left, Shots Fired Jezpher Navarro, Austin Diaz, and Christian Lucero pose for a photo after they pulled off an upset against two-time 3x3 champions Team Nesian Built in the finals of the January NMIBF Marianas Arsenal 3x3 Basketball Series last Saturday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.